



# Comprehensive Plan



Prepared by Regional Planning  
and Coordinating Commission  
of Greene County Ohio







CITY OF

# Bellbrook

## Comprehensive Plan

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Prepared by The Regional Planning and Coordinating Commission

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## Greene County, Ohio

Adopted by the City of Bellbrook Planning Board February 28, 2019

Adopted by the City of Bellbrook City Council March 11, 2019  
Resolution #2019-1



# Acknowledgements

## City of Bellbrook

### Planning Board

Dave Van Veldhuizen  
Denny Bennet Brady Harding  
Brady Harding  
Ed Stangel  
Mitchell Thompson

### City Manager

Melissa Dodd

### Assistant to the City Manager

Don Buczek

### Mayor

Bob Baird

### Deputy Mayor

Mike Schweller

### City Council Members

Nick Edwards  
Forrest Greenwood  
Darryl McGill  
Elaine Middlestetter  
Dona Seger-Lawson

---

## Regional Planning and Coordinating Commission of Greene County, Ohio

### Executive Director

J. Devon Shoemaker AICP

### Planning Staff

Jessica Hansen— GIS Planner I  
Rhonda Painter—Administrative Specialist

### Other Contributors:

Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission, Greene County GIS, Greene County Archives, Joshua Anderson, Beatriz Avila, Kenneth LeBlanc, Eric Henry from Greene County Department of Economic Development



# Executive Summary

The City of Bellbrook Comprehensive Plan is a guide to reinvent and revitalize downtown Bellbrook to become a destination for its residents and for the region. It recognizes the importance of saving history while promoting incremental change for a vibrant future, and provides policy recommendations for land use, infrastructure, transportation, health, and economic development. The plan embraces that fact that neighborhoods are Bellbrook's biggest assets that should be connected to destinations such as downtown, parks, schools, and trails via all modes of travel and personal abilities.

Six subject areas and an implementation table make up the plan. They work together and are somewhat inseparable, toward achieving the vision statement developed from various public input venues held over the past two years including a Walkable Community Workshop, planning board, council meetings, online surveys, and an open house. Each subject area contains goals and objectives and when necessary with short-term recommendations for quick implementation. As one progresses through this plan it will become obvious that recommendations or goals in one section, overlap recommendations in another section, and for good reason, everything presented here is interrelated and focused toward making Bellbrook a healthy vibrant destination that is "people" oriented. The key is to understand the interrelated pieces of the puzzle, as one piece connects to the other to form a larger picture. The Venn diagram shows how inseparable each subject area are from one another. The six subject areas are as follows:

1. Downtown Revitalization and Historic Preservation
2. Community Identity
3. Transportation Plan
4. Land Use
5. Healthy Communities
6. Economic Development



## Downtown Revitalization and Historic Preservation

At its core, this plan brings forth modern planning concepts together to incrementally reshape downtown into a vibrant, pedestrian friendly destination. The plan recommends a multi-faceted and comprehensive approach to achieve this goal. For the long-term, the Main Street Program, Form-Based Codes, and becoming a Certified Local Government will aid Bellbrook with reshaping downtown and preserving its history. These long-term planning methods will create a more "traditional" downtown look and feel over the next thirty years or longer. Short-term zoning code adjustments are recommended to address any potential for redevelopment that may occur while striving to meet long-term goals.

## Community Identity

Community Identity involves creating a unified and unique brand that is different from anything else in the region to generate interest from existing community members and to attract young professionals and empty nesters to fill downtown apartments, shops, coffee houses, and



restaurants. Branding is part of the place making and Main Street process. Gateways are part of that branding and marketing strategy. Gateways to a community should embody the uniqueness of the city and instill a sense of pride for residents and should represent what visitors should expect when they arrive. The City of Bellbrook should develop a Gateway Plan for its entryways at both ends of Franklin and on Main Street as well as at the entry to the Downtown District as an element of its marketing toolbox.

## Transportation Plan

The transportation element is comprehensive in scope including all modes of travel from active transportation, public transportation, and travel by auto. This plan places greater focus on active transportation because of its importance for creating connections and making downtown more pedestrian and bike friendly. It guide's public investment in improvements designed to make active transport more desirable, focused on the human scale, and safety. It is also an economic development tool in the scheme of downtown revitalization. If people cannot walk or bike, and neighborhoods are not connected, then downtown revitalization will be a challenging prospect. This section recommends implementing the various improvements shown on the Pedestrian, Bike, and Multi-use Map; adoption of a Complete Streets Policy; consider the recommendations in the Access Management study.

## Land Use Plan

Seven land use categories were chosen for inclusion in this plan. Public input showed us that the citizens of Bellbrook overwhelmingly desire to maintain the small town suburban feel. Since growing outward is not a goal, Planning staff recommend growing and redeveloping inward with downtown renewal and maintaining the quality of existing residential neighborhoods as a primary goal. The Future Land Use map gives us the 30,000-foot view of what the City will look like thirty years from now. City leaders should use this map as a general guide and use it as the basis for future zoning, design code adjustments and overhauls. For the purpose of this executive summary, we will

explain two special district recommendations that are of great importance to the land use plan:

### Active Downtown District

Planning staff recommends the creation of a special overlay district within the bounds of the Mixed Use Downtown District. This overlay area would contain special design regulations intended to promote a traditional small city downtown identity through architecture and form as described in the Transportation Plan Section of this Plan. This area of Bellbrook is a key area to create a mixed use, pedestrian, bike, family, and business friendly environment. The future of this area should be built upon a "placemaking" effort led by the citizens, business owners, and leaders of Bellbrook via the Main Street four-point approach and its eight principles for revitalization. Bellbrook should focus complete streets and access management practices in this area along with new streetscape elements, and for the long-term, form-based codes. Another long-term focus should be the reallocation and redevelopment of property currently owned by the city as a model for future redevelopment to reshape downtown.

### Community Commercial or Recreation

The Community Commercial Designation is for property of great importance for the future. The area is focused on land known locally as "Sans Souci". As one of the few areas inside the city limits that is essentially undeveloped, this area could be a target for developers of residential subdivisions. However, public input received at the open house clearly showed us that the residents who responded did not desire another residential subdivision in the City and specifically not on this property.

Ideas for this area focused on community-based



commercial land uses specifically mixed uses with public open spaces and parkland. Other ideas included keeping it private as open space; developing a community center with trail connections to adjacent parks eventually to the Little Miami; mixed-use restaurants with a amphitheater and small shops; and a family resort with plenty of open space for community use. The ideas were many and diverse. Decision makers should prioritize benefits to the communities' quality of life and if a proposed land, use positively affects Bellbrook as a “destination”!

## Healthy Community

How we plan and design communities has a direct impact on the health of our residents. Throughout this plan we have focused on subjects that foster active lifestyles and social interaction to make Bellbrook a more attractive place to live, recreate, entertain, and do business. The plan impacts the health of our community by promoting walkability, mixed-use infill development downtown (urban form and character), the bike and pedestrian plan, land use (parks) and a complete streets policy. This section will build upon the previous chapters by recommending specific actions related to community fitness, support of healthy and local food options.

## Economic Development

The term economic development refers to improving the well-being and quality of life for the community of Bellbrook by creating/ retaining jobs, diversifying the economic base of the city (different types of jobs/different industries) and growing the tax base (better wages, more people). Recommendations include:



Encouraging conditions that attract millennials such as walkable neighborhoods and downtown, bike paths and schools along with active events, promotion of the arts and events such as outdoor concerts;



Development of marketing strategies that sell Bellbrook as an experience;



Government transparency and improved flow of information to and from the public;



Provision of economic incentives in the form of grants, loans, tax abatement, tax credits, and utility discounts;



Development of business incubators/co-share environments.



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## Introduction & Background

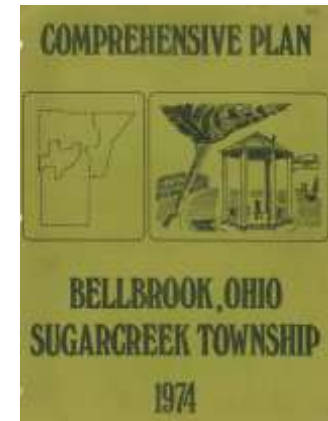
### What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan is a long-term vision and policy document that guides the development and evolution of a community. It is flexible and treated as a living document, modified from time to time to meet changing socio-economic and environmental conditions. The plan is critical because policy-makers rely on the comprehensive plan to help make decisions regarding zoning, development, infrastructure, transportation, health and other issues.



*"If you fail to plan, you  
are planning to fail!"  
-Benjamin Franklin*

Bellbrook and Sugarcreek Township collaboratively developed a comprehensive plan in 1974, being the first of its kind to be adopted by a City and a Township. Today, it is necessary for Bellbrook to develop its own plan because of its unique needs and opportunities. Bellbrook faces the same challenges that many small communities have faced: how to rebuild an authentic and vibrant town center, how to maintain quality of life for residents, and how to preserve its history well into the future.



1974 Bellbrook & Sugarcreek Township Comprehensive Plan

### Elements of the Comprehensive Plan

- 1 Downtown Revitalization and Historic Preservation
- 2 Community Identity
- 3 Active Transportation Plan
- 4 Land Use Plan
- 5 Healthy Community
- 6 Economic Development
- 7 Implementation

As one progresses through this plan it will become obvious that recommendations or goals in one section, overlap recommendations in another section, and for good reason. Everything presented here is interrelated and focused toward making Bellbrook a healthy vibrant destination that is "people" oriented. The key is to understand the interrelated pieces of the puzzle, as one piece connects the other to form a larger picture. First, let us explore the vision.



## Developing a Vision

Planning staff and community officials gathered public input through a variety of methods including council meetings, planning board meetings, workshops, community surveys, and an open house.



*Bellbrook Walkability Workshop*

To kick-off the public participation process, in April of 2017, the City of Bellbrook along with the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission, and the Regional Planning and Coordinating Commission of Green County, conducted a Walkable Community Workshop (see Appendix). It was attended by 45 people and separated into four groups representing a large cross-section of community leaders and citizens.

The workshop produced “first impressions” of Bellbrook’s needs including walkability, infrastructure, parking, traffic calming, wayfinding, streetscapes, and connecting

neighborhoods to destinations such as parks and downtown. Next, surveys were developed and made available on the City of Bellbrook’s website. The survey asked questions that focused on image and perception of the City; another section focused on Downtown Bellbrook; and the final portions focused on the needs of Seniors, communications, and finally on public services. The survey gathered input from 153 respondents.

It became very clear that the citizens of Bellbrook have a passion for its downtown, a strong sense of community, a desire for connecting neighborhoods to destinations via sidewalks and trails, a passion for its parks and schools, historic preservation, and an overwhelming hunger to retain and enhance its small town charm.



*Bellbrook Open House November 5, 2018*



From the responses gathered from public input, planning meetings, and analysis of socio-economic and physiographic data, the Planning Board and staff developed a draft vision statement and guiding principles that form the foundation of this plan. Planning Board and staff then presented planning concepts and recommendations that could help Bellbrook achieve the vision at an open house described below.



Word Cloud developed from key words from community survey

On November 5th 2018, the City of Bellbrook held an open house style public input session at the Bellbrook Sugarcreek Park District's Community Center with 60 residents attending. The open house was a chance for the community to become familiar with planning concepts explored in this plan and review the draft vision statement. Each participant had opportunity to express their opinions on maps and on comment cards at each station. Each station represented a different planning concept that if implemented could help the City of Bellbrook realize its vision.

Moving forward after compiling data received from the open house, planning staff created the draft plan for review and adoption by the Planning Board and City Council.

*City staff should review the plan and propose amendments regularly to meet changing socio-economic conditions, land use, or other opportunities. This plan is a living document.*

Adoption of the plan is not and should not be the end of the story. Citizens and leaders of Bellbrook must realize that a comprehensive plan should not sit on a shelf as many do. Decision-makers should reference the plan when considering problems and opportunities related to land use, zoning, infrastructure, and other topics covered under this plan. City staff should review and propose amendments to the plan regularly to meet changing socio-economic conditions, land use, or other opportunities. This plan is a living document.





## Vision Statement

A Vision Statement simply describes a community's shared image of what it will look like well into the future:



To maintain and promote a community that is family-centered with small-town charm.



To grow a more vibrant, diverse and sustainable downtown business community while also preserving the city's unique history and architecture.



To create a healthier, safer, and more walkable community.



To further enhance the excellence of our schools, parks, and city services.

## Guiding Principles

Guiding principles help guide policy decisions moving forward. This is how we achieve the vision.



We will reinvent and revitalize downtown by implementing policies that attract business and people making downtown a “destination” for everyone.



We will improve our infrastructure such as streets, storm drains and sidewalks whenever possible and create a plan for maintaining our infrastructure in the future.



We will promote multi-modal solutions to better connect our neighborhoods to destinations.



We will maintain our high quality of life by enhancing our neighborhoods by adopting appropriate zoning, historic overlay, and property maintenance codes and include a variety of housing options where appropriate.



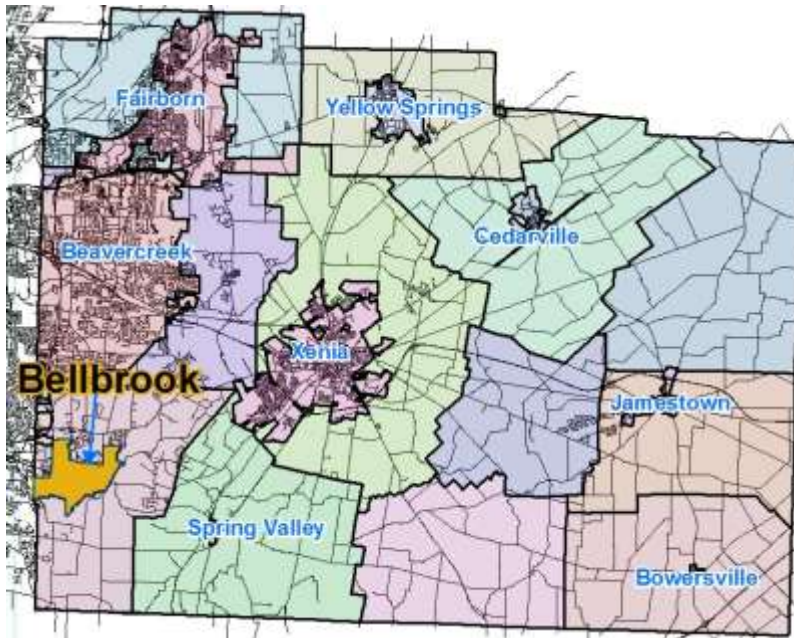
We will promote the health of our community focusing on new bike paths, healthy local food options, and promoting community events such as 5k races and local fitness groups.



We will foster a sense of community and civic pride by promoting volunteerism, the arts, and by holding community-wide and neighborhood events.



## Community Profile

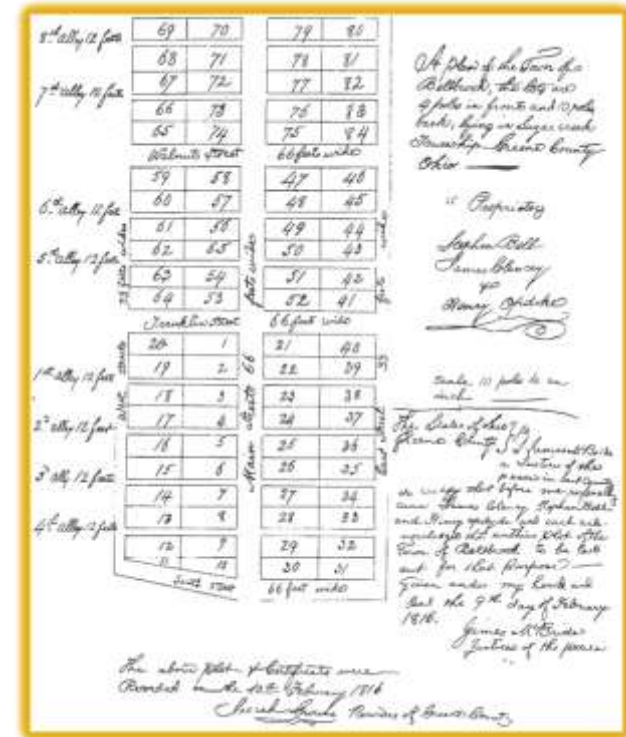


Bellbrook Location Map

Bellbrook is an easygoing residential suburb that maintains a small town feel. Amenities such as access to over 200-acres of parkland, hiking trails, multi-use paths, top notch city services, and host of the annual Sugar Maple Festival and the Lions festival make Bellbrook an attractive place to live and recreate. The Bellbrook historic museum is a center of pride in the community's history, with over 200 years of history. Its school district is one of the best in the State, which attracts families to move to Bellbrook and Sugarcreek Township.

Settled in 1816 and named for one of its founders, Stephen Bell, who helped form part of what is now the "old village" area. The second part of the city's name refers to the many local waterways including the Little Sugarcreek, Sugarcreek and Little Miami River. On February 10th 1816, Stephen Bell along with James Clency and Henry Opdyke submitted the

first town plat of Bellbrook. It consisted of 84 lots and established Main Street, Franklin Street, Walnut Street and South Street and numerous alleys.



Bellbrook Original Town Plat

The city has grown since then. It saw exponential growth during 1950 through 1990, most of that being single-family residential subdivisions and some multi-family complexes. Residential use is the most common representing 70% of all land area. Single-family use makes up 96% of all residential use. In downtown where density is higher, a mixture of housing options are available with single family, two family, multi family, and mixed-use dwellings. To the north and west, the variety in housing options decreases and single-family homes are the most dominant land use.



## Population

Bellbrook had a relatively stable population without much growth between 1870 and 1950, due in part to it being a small farm-to-market village. **Chart 1** shows there was a notable rise in population from 1950-1970, most of which was a result of the baby boom. The most significant increase in population occurred between 1970 and 1980, due to the 1974 annexation of developments in Sugarcreek Township that were three times the size Bellbrook Village. The significant population increase between 1980 and 2000 was due primarily to infill development once the sewer system became operational. Since 2000, the population has been relatively stable.

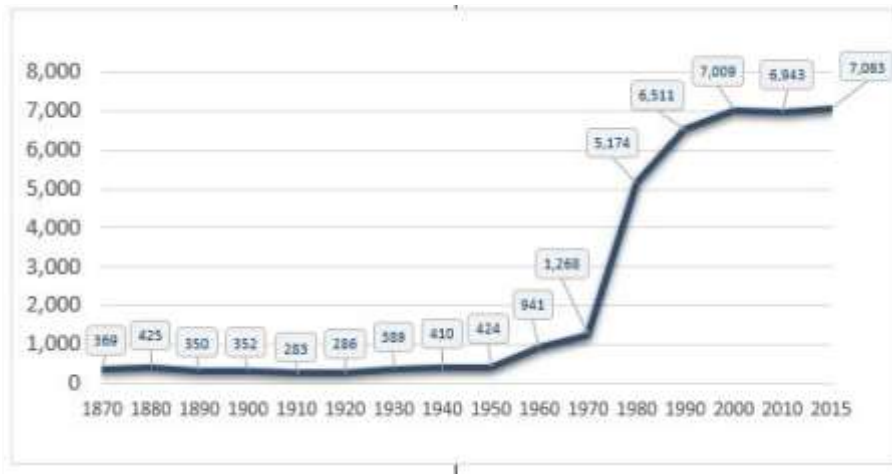


Chart 1: Bellbrook Population from 1870 to 2015

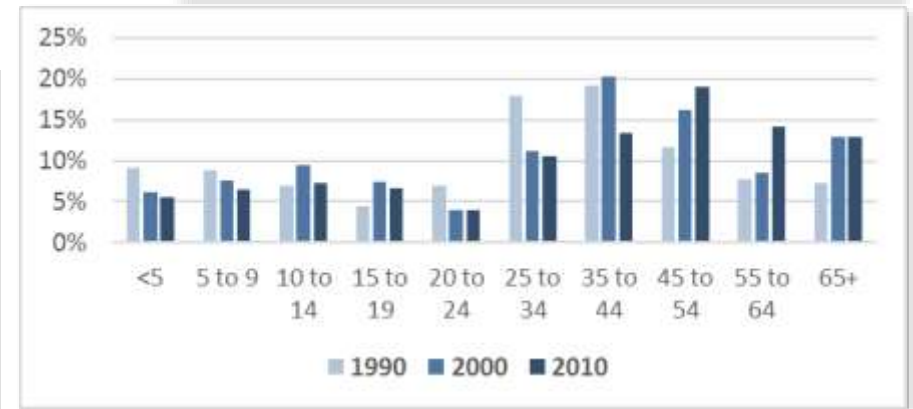


Chart 2: Bellbrook Age Distribution 1990 to 2010

**Chart 2** depicts Bellbrook's age distribution trend. This graph depicts a generalized summary of age groups from the 1990 Census to the 2010 Census. In Bellbrook, population largely shifts from one age range to the adjacent range in the following census. This suggests that Bellbrook maintains a relatively stable population. Additionally, there is a consistent decline in people entering the 15-19 and 20-24 cohorts, which may be due to the younger population leaving for college or moving to more urban areas.

The data examined during the planning process shows marginal population growth in the future and an aging population. Annexation decisions, redevelopment, and land uses and a host of other factors can influence future populations, age composition and growth. Factors that the city can control include: development of multi-family units, allowing accessory dwelling units in downtown, and upper level apartments could influence population as well.



## Income & Employment

The median household income for the City of Bellbrook is \$76,576 which is lower than surrounding Sugarcreek Township at \$105,774 but higher than Greene County. This observation can be seen in **Chart 4**. The City of Bellbrook enjoys a relatively low unemployment rate at 3.3% and being lower than that of Sugarcreek and Greene County.



Source: Pexels.com Stock Photo

## Housing

According to ACS 2016, data there are approximately 2,840 housing units with two percent built since 2010. Approximately fourteen percent of households are renter-occupied with an average household size of 2.10. The average household size for owner-occupied is 2.58, being very similar to the State average.

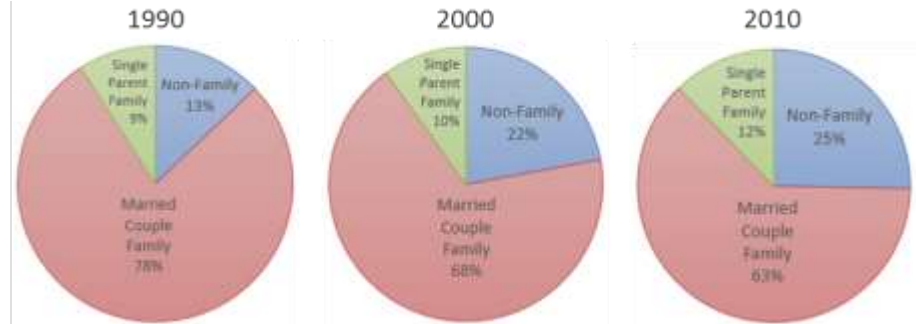


Chart 3: Bellbrook Change in Household Characteristics

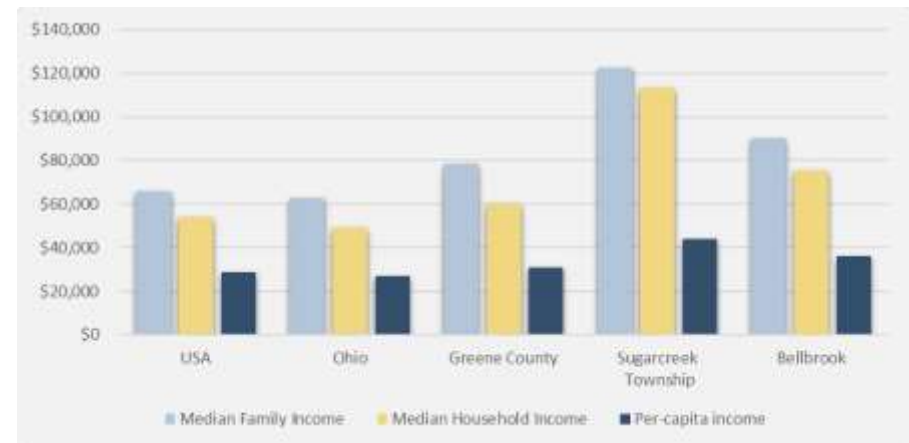


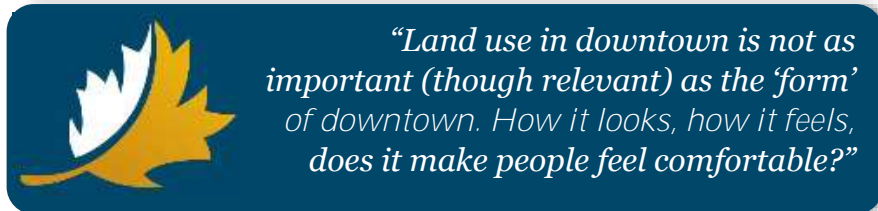
Chart 4: Comparative Household Incomes



## Downtown Revitalization & Historic Preservation

It became very clear early on in the planning process that reinventing and revitalizing downtown Bellbrook is a priority. The citizens of Bellbrook realize that change within is vital to saving its historic places while attracting business and people making a sustainable and prosperous downtown.

It also became clear that traditional zoning through controlling land use has failed to establish downtown Bellbrook as a destination. Land use in downtown is not as important (though relevant) as the “form” of downtown. How it looks, how it feels, does it make people feel comfortable? Ultimately, great places are molded to make people feel welcome....imparting a sense of place.



Historically, downtowns were the focal point of community life and the economic vitality of a community. Downtowns developed organically out of necessity and efficiency. This is where business and trade took place. Government offices, libraries, grocers, places of worship, hotels, were all centered in downtown districts. Downtown was the heart and soul of the community. A mixed use of businesses and residential, usually at high densities and walkable defines the traditional downtown. Many communities have struggled to maintain a vibrant successful downtown core especially since urban sprawl and auto-centric lifestyles have become the norm.



Downtown Bellbrook  
Source: Don Buczek City of Bellbrook

Today, “everything old is new again” as the saying goes. Small cities and urban cores search for answers to reimagine downtown, using the best of what worked in the past, and dreaming of new techniques to drive innovation to make downtown more inviting, safe, and sustainable socially and economically. Downtowns are becoming “destinations” again.

People have a strong desire to gather and be social in a small town environment. Large malls cannot provide that on a consistent basis because they are auto centered. In fact, newer developments try to replicate the “traditional downtown” feel by designing its roads in a grid pattern with a walkable design and large centralized parking area far separated from the activity center.



The large malls have their place, but a small town has the personal “people oriented” feel and have the potential to offer specialized business and amenities that malls cannot replicate. A walkable mixed-use destination is what people find attractive and downtown Bellbrook can seize the future by reinventing and redeveloping its downtown incrementally over time.

What is a destination downtown? A destination is a deliberately marketed and constructed place to attract residents and outside visitors to recreate, educate, eat, entertain, shop, and stay. It is a place-making effort by the residents of a city and the owners of downtown businesses, and supported by local government to define the character of downtown.



*“reimagine downtown, using the best of what worked in the past, and dreaming of new techniques to drive innovation to make downtown more inviting, safe, and sustainable socially and economically.”*

## Location

Downtown Bellbrook is in the eastern quarter of the city and described as the “Old Village”. The downtown area is focused along State Route 725 (Franklin), the main transportation corridor running east west through the City. Many alleys run between blocks for access to housing, businesses and parking. The Old Village Area (Downtown) is home to a number of public facilities, including the Municipal Building, the Winters-Bellbrook Library on Franklin Street, and Sugarcreek Township Fire Station #71. Bellbrook Fire Station #1 and city service garage are on North West Street near the Bellbrook Plaza. Bellbrook Park,

located along Main Street, offers recreation just a short walks distance north from the Franklin Street corridor.

Its two largest retailers anchor downtown Bellbrook, Dot’s Supermarket on the west and Dollar General on the east. Most of the other retail is concentrated along Franklin Street and within Bellbrook Plaza. A number of single-family homes mix with the businesses along Franklin Street, especially east of East Street and west of West Street. There is a concentration of multi-family structures northeast of the center of town along Ryder Court. The residential area south of the downtown is primarily single-family dwellings with some two-family units and a few multi-family structures.



Figure 1.1 Bellbrook Downtown District





## Goal 1: Reinvent & Revitalize Downtown Bellbrook

While Bellbrook has many events and activities for residents and for visitors, with events such as the Sugar Maple festival, downtown is not the activity center that it could or should be for a few reasons. Visually, downtown does not inspire a vibrant feel, partially due to space between buildings with what looks like vacant lots. Buildings are set back too far from the sidewalk and frontage zone, and there are too many access points along Franklin and Main Street. Access points reduce the number of on-street parking spaces available. Many parts of downtown appear disconnected and have an auto-centric feel. What we will discuss below are methods and objectives that with persistence, and patience, can change downtown Bellbrook into a vibrant downtown core that it was a hundred years ago. Traditional downtown cores are formed by “walls” of continuous buildings with little to no gaps between, filling entire blocks, varying in height but usually two to three stories, and similar and yet sometimes variable architectural styles with a mixture of uses.

### *Objective 1.1: Adopt the Main Street Approach*

The Main Street Approach to downtown revitalization and historic preservation is a proven methodology developed by Main Street America. Heritage Ohio coordinates the Ohio Main Street Program. The Ohio Main Street program is community-driven approach to revitalization, historic preservation, and economic growth of downtown.

#### RECOMMENDATION: CREATE A MORE CONTINUOUS BUILT ENVIRONMENT THAT CLOSELY ALIGNS WITH A TRADITIONAL DOWNTOWN

As opportunities arise to redevelop property along Franklin Street and Main Street, codes specific to the Downtown District should reflect zero (O’O”) setback and the building footprint of any new structure should extend to the public right-of-way at all street-facing facades, with no setback up to at least the second floor for multiple-story structures.

The methodology is based upon four points: Organization, Design, Promotions, and Economic Development. These key elements work together to create a common vision for the downtown district. A program coordinator will facilitate cooperation among the key groups that are involved in Downtown Bellbrook to develop a common marketing and branding theme and organize events. In some cases organizers form a non-profit organization to oversee the revitalization efforts.

Implementation of the four-point approach is founded on eight principles that should be adhered to. Utilizing this approach will require a very active Downtown Association in partnership with city administration and residents. The approach is incremental and requires focus, dedication, and patience. The approach develops new policies and/or changes existing policies to implement a new vision for downtown. Policies changes include: zoning code modifications and overlay districts, streetscape plans, adoption of design codes, maintenance codes, a complete streets policy, and access management rules.



## The Main Street approach focuses on four points: Organization, Design, Promotions, and Economic Development.

- ① **Organization** - involves the building of a general consensus and cooperation between the groups that play a role in the downtown.
- ② **Design** - involves improving the downtown's image by improving its physical appearance.
- ③ **Promotion** - involves promoting the downtown's unique characteristics to shoppers, investors, new businesses, tourists, and others.
- ④ **Economic Development** - strengthens and diversifies the existing economic base of downtown.

While the Main Street approach provides the format for successful revitalization, implementation of the four-point approach is based on eight principles that pertain to all areas of the revitalization effort:

- ① **Comprehensive** - Commercial district revitalization is a complex process and cannot be accomplished through a single project. For successful and lasting results, a comprehensive approach must be used. Simply stated, comprehensive means working on all
- ② **Incremental** - Small projects and simple activities lead to a more sophisticated understanding of the revitalization process and help develop skills so that more complex problems can be addressed and more ambitious projects undertaken. Starting with small projects creates progress and momentum at the same time.

- ③ **Self-help** - Local leaders must have the desire and the will to make the project successful. The NMSC provides direction, ideas and training; but continued and long-term success depends upon the involvement and commitment of the community.
- ④ **Public/Private Partnerships** - Both the public and private sectors have a vital interest in the economic health and physical stability of the district. Each sector has a role to play, and each must understand the other's strengths and limitations so that an effective partnership can be forged.
- ⑤ **Identifying and Capitalizing on Existing Assets** - Business districts must capitalize on the assets that make them unique. Every district has unique qualities – like distinctive buildings and human scale that give people a sense of belonging or businesses that have become local institutions. Main Street cannot create new landmarks or institutions; existing local assets must serve as the foundation for all aspects of the revitalization program.
- ⑥ **Quality** - Quality must be emphasized in every aspect of the revitalization program. This applies equally to each element of the program, from storefront design to promotional campaigns to educational programs.
- ⑦ **Change** - Changes in attitude and practice are necessary to improve current economic conditions. Public support for change will build as the program grows.



- 8 Implementation-Oriented.** Activity creates confidence in the program and greater levels of participation. Frequent, visible changes are a reminder that the revitalization process is under way. Small projects at the beginning of the program pave the way for larger activities as the revitalization effort matures.

## *Objective 1.2: Create a Special Active Downtown Overlay District*

Planning staff recommends the creation of a special overlay district within the bounds of the traditional downtown area of Bellbrook. This overlay area would contain special design regulations intended to promote traditional small downtown identity through architecture and form. In the short-term, Bellbrook should amend the zoning code to reflect the short-term code recommendations mentioned previously while the overhaul of design and form-based codes takes place.

City staff should direct economic development efforts, grants, and tax incentives to businesses locating or redeveloping in the special overlay district. **Figure 1.2** shows the planning staff recommended boundary for this district. However, it is also recommended that the downtown association (when organized) along with city staff assess and inventory the entire Downtown District to determine the final boundary of this special district. The suggested boundary generally follows the first tier of parcels and businesses on the north and south of Franklin Street bounded by Sugarcreek and Dots Market to the west and the Bellbrook United Methodist Church and the Victorian Bellbrook LLC property to the East.

## Short-Term Code Recommendations for Special Active Downtown Overlay District

- a** Close the Gaps: Change zoning code for redevelopment and new construction to include a ZERO setback policy so buildings appear continuous...no gaps between buildings.
- b** New structures should extend to the Right of Way: This usually means the facade extending to where the sidewalk begins.
- c** Inset building entry approximately 6-ft to provide shelter from elements.
- d** Require multi-story design for new construction and for substantial reconstruction
- e** Parking should be on-street or behind structures but not visible from roadway
- f** Codes should promote mixed-use with upper story apartments and ground level retail and office space for new construction and substantial renovations.
- g** Implement Access Management Best Practices
- h** Allow on-sidewalk dining furniture where enough room exists

An overlay district (shown on page 13) should be created to implement the above short-term adjustments. These could be simple placeholders until the city develops a more robust form-based code.





Figure 1.2 Active Downtown District Overlay

## Objective 1.3: Adopt Form-Based codes for Downtown Overlay District

The question becomes “how do we reshape the built environment over the next twenty years and longer?” Form-based codes will help change the fabric of downtown and works well with the Design element of the Main Street program.

Form-Based Codes for the Downtown District and western commercial district of Bellbrook is an option worthy of exploration. The Form-Based Codes Institute (FBCI), a program of Smart Growth America, defines form-based code as “...a land development regulation that fosters predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle for the code.

A form-based code is a regulation, not a mere guideline, adopted into city, town, or county law. A form-based code offers a powerful alternative to conventional zoning regulation.” Traditional zoning seeks to segregate uses, regulate items such as floor area ratio, setbacks, parking ratios and traffic level of service. Form based codes focus less on use, however, it does promote mixed use, walkability, build to lines and number of floors. The following taken from the FBCI briefly explains the differences between conventional zoning and form-based codes

### Conventional Zoning

Density use, FAR (floor area ratio), setbacks, parking requirements, maximum building heights specified



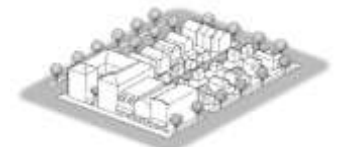
### Zoning Design Guidelines

Conventional zoning requirements, plus frequency of openings and surface articulation specified



### Form-Based Codes

Street and building types (or mix of types), build-to lines, number of floors, and percentage of built site frontage specified.



Above Images and Definitions Source: Form-Based Codes Institute ([frombasedcodes.org](http://frombasedcodes.org))



## Five Main Elements of Form-Based Codes

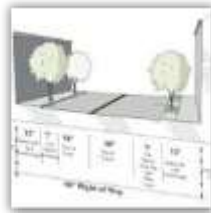
### 1 Regulating Plan:

A plan or map of the regulated area designating the locations where different building form standards apply



### 2 Public Standards:

Specifies elements in the public realm: sidewalk, travel lanes, on-street parking, street trees and furniture, etc.



### 3 Building Standards:

Regulations controlling the features, configurations, and functions of buildings that define and shape the public realm.



### 4 Administration:

A clearly defined and streamlined application and project review process



### 5 Definitions:

A glossary to ensure the precise use of technical terms.

Building Elements		
Encroachments		
Front, Areas II, III, IV	To ROW	
Front, Areas V, VI	10' beyond	
Front, recessed	3'	
Side	3'	
Notes		
Bay windows, balconies, stoops and the encroachment areas.		

The Form-based code is a written and schematic descriptor of what “Main Street” and walkable communities look like. Let it be clear, that this approach takes a special planning process, a collaborative planning process that can be done through the main street approach mentioned earlier. The image below from the Form-Based Code Institute shows the typical results of the design aspect of the code—mixed use, continuous “wall” of buildings, multi-story, yet each structure unique, on-street parking, and walkable.

The process of developing a form-based code can take years and a lot of coordination with downtown associates and other stakeholders, and planning. In the short term the City should consider the Short-Term Code Recommendations mentioned previously on page 12.



Figure 1.3 Example of Downtown Form

Source: Form-Based Codes Institute ([frombasedcodes.org](http://frombasedcodes.org))

Above Images and Definitions Source: Form-Based Codes Institute



## *Objective 1.4: Adopt Policies that Encourage Walkability and access to Downtown*

Walkability is necessary to grow and redevelop downtown Bellbrook. It is vital to place-making and quality of life. Developing the infrastructure to enhance walkability of downtown and to establish connectivity of neighborhoods to destinations is essential. Later, this plan will discuss in greater detail under the active transportation section, concepts such as complete streets and access management....all policies that will contribute to walkability of downtown. As mentioned in the introduction, recommendations will overlap. Access Management policies can help eliminate access points along the “activity streets” of downtown creating additional on-street parking which is essential to revitalization. Complete Streets is another policy that will soon be discussed at length in the active transportation section of this plan. Complete streets is a policy and philosophy whereby local government considers all modes of transportation and all types of users when shaping the public right of way.



*“Make Downtown a place where people want to live.”*

## *Objective 1.5: Redevelop City-owned Property Located in Downtown*




The City of Bellbrook owns multiple parcels in downtown located northwest of the intersection of Main and Franklin. Structures located there serve as either storage or for other city services. These parcels represent a large percentage of prime space that could otherwise be available to business. Serious consideration should be given to repurpose or redevelop these parcels to help change the form of downtown . Existing structures located there serve as either storage or for other city services. Current uses are not the highest and best use given the prime location.

Redevelopment of the parcels could be achieved through public and private partnerships, or as a spec property or as a business incubator. Bellbrook should cooperate with the Chamber, local universities, and Greene County Economic Development to evaluate these properties, identify funding opportunities, and create alternatives and partnerships.

Most importantly, this is an opportunity for local government to be the “primer” to propel the city forward toward change by taking the lead to partner in the redevelopment of one or more of these properties...As they say in the business world “if you build it, they will come”.

City-owned properties identified for redevelopment should be transferred under the management of a Community Improvement Corporation (CIC). A CIC is a non-profit corporation authorized under ORC chapter 1724 and organized under ORC chapter 1702. CIC’s can manage real property for economic development purposes much more easily than local government. These corporations can operate at the speed of business and better promote competition. CIC’s have a wide range of powers including :



-  Ability to make loans, and borrow money
-  Buy, lease, and sell real or personal property apply for and administer grants
-  Acquire the good will, business rights, real and personal property, and assets of an individual or business.

The City of Bellbrook could utilize Greene County's already established CIC.

## *Objective 1.6: Short-Term Streetscape Amenities*

Some streetscape amenities can be installed during the transition to a complete streets policy and design plans. These items are vitally important to encouraging use by pedestrians and cyclists. Items such as crosswalk striping improvements and flashing beacons, pedestrian scale lighting, and sidewalk repair, street furniture, bike racks, plantings, pavement markings, and community gardens. These are all items that can be put in place over the next few years at marginal cost. This will be discussed in greater detail in the transportation section.

## Goal 2: Focus on Historic Preservation

Historic Preservation is an economic development tool that will play a part in shaping the future of Bellbrook. We preserve what we hold dear because it provides a sense of pride in our community, creates a sense of place, and makes Bellbrook more competitive as a place to live, work, and play.

The Main Street approach along with form-based codes are the implementation arm of historic preservation. Historic properties however should receive higher priorities toward material type when rehabbing existing properties.

## *Objective 2.1: Become a Certified Local Government Through the State Historic Preservation Office*

Becoming a Certified Local Government entitles Bellbrook to apply for matching grants such as the Ohio Historic Preservation Tax credit. If the project is on the National Register of Historic Places, the project may qualify for federal historic tax credits as well. Qualifying projects include preservation projects such as identifying historic and archaeological resources, rehabilitation projects, studies, community education on historic preservation, and to nominate properties to the National Register. A qualifying project could obtain up to 45% of its capital costs through a combination of these programs.

## *Objective 2.2: Develop a Historic Site and Structure Inventory*

During the downtown assessment phase, the city should inventory and evaluate its historic assets and identify structures that may be eligible for nomination to the national register or of local importance. These assets form the base for future redevelopment of other property. These historic properties should influence the design and character of the districts. While very few properties qualify for inclusion on the National Register, it will be of great benefit locally when making land use and redevelopment decisions.





## Goal 3: Infrastructure Improvements to Downtown

Various infrastructure improvements were noted during the Walkability Workshop. One of the key observations made that stands out to planning staff are the open drainage ditches on East Franklin Street within the Downtown District. The presence of overhead utilities running the length of Main Street is a major visual detractor.

### *Objective 3.1: Replace Open Drainage with Storm Sewers*

Sections of Franklin Street currently have open drainage between the road and the sidewalk, limiting parking and making an unpleasant experience for pedestrians. Installation of storm sewers would be beneficial in creating more parking and a more attractive environment. Drainage is currently an issue in parts of the residential areas of downtown. Standing water and mud often block the sidewalks along Maple Street, causing pedestrians to walk in the street.



Figure 1.4 Example of Drainage Ditch in Downtown Bellbrook

### *Objective 3.2: Work with Utility Suppliers to Place Utilities Underground on Main Street*

Placing utilities underground will go a long way for beautification of downtown Bellbrook. Main Street endures the most of these facilities on the west side of the street. Benefits include, visual enhancements, additional public space, room for wider sidewalks, and room for streetscape elements such as lampposts, bike racks and street furniture. City officials should work with utility companies over the long term to find a solution.



Figure 1.5 Example of Overhead Utilities in Downtown Bellbrook



## Community Identity

During the Main Street approach, the community will need to identify its unique characteristics to promote to businesses, shoppers, tourists, and potential residents that you want to attract to downtown...Identify that one or two things that set Bellbrook apart from other areas that compete. Pay attention to Bellbrook's history and its influence on these characteristics. Think of Bellbrook as a canvas and characteristics are the paint you will use to interpret Bellbrook's identity. Bellbrook... It's a brand!



### Goal 4: Develop a Community Identity Through Branding, Gateways, and Wayfinding

#### *Objective 4.1: Develop a Brand*

A unified and unique brand that is different from anything else in the region is required to generate interest from existing community members and to attract young professionals and empty nesters to fill downtown apartments, shops, coffee houses, and restaurants. Be unique! Do not do what other communities in the region are doing. Discover what your own citizens and outsiders love about Bellbrook and be zealous in telling the story by promoting the brand. Your brand is who you are as a community. It is NOT a marketing sign or slogan. The citizens should develop the brand because ultimately they are the best consultants.

One method for developing a brand is to form a community identity committee to reach out to citizens and identify Bellbrook's unique traits and potential. Then hold a branding contest meeting the predetermined criteria. The downtown associates, chamber, or planning commission could facilitate this process.

#### *Objective 4.2: Build New Gateways*

Branding is part of the place-making and Main Street process. Gateways are part of that branding and marketing strategy. Gateways to a community should embody the uniqueness of the city and instill a sense of pride for residents and represent what visitors should expect when they arrive. The City of Bellbrook should develop a Gateway Plan for its entryways at both ends of Franklin and on Main Street as well as at the entry to the Downtown District as an element of its marketing toolbox.

The first image on next page ([Figure 1.6](#)) shows the City of Whitehall's latest effort at branding and new gateways to the city. It creates a distinct and identifiable boundary and sends the message that business opportunities are available. The gateway features the City's new brand and logo. So visitors know when they enter Whitehall and at the same time know what to expect through the brand.





*Figure 1.6 City of Whitehall Gateway*

Source: <https://www.emht.com/news/2016/june/emht-s-whitehall-gateway-project-enlivens-city-s-entry-points/>



*Figure 1.7 City of Bellbrook Gateway*

The second image ([Figure 1.7](#)) shows the existing City of Bellbrook Gateway. Each entry to Bellbrook has a similar gateway sign. The existing signs show important organizations that are active in the community. Gateways should have symbolism that represents the community and a brief statement that figuratively says this is who we are and what you should expect!

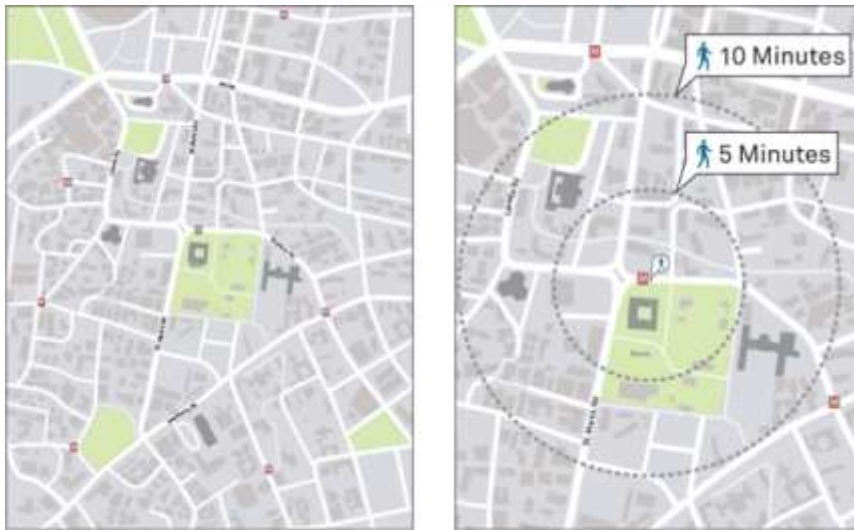
Gateways are not limited to the entry of a community, but can be used to distinguish special district within a community such as a historic and/or downtown district.

In the past, wayfinding focused on auto traffic often ignoring pedestrians and bicyclists. More and more communities are seeing the benefits of wayfinding techniques at the pedestrian and bicyclist level. Vibrant downtowns must utilize pedestrian scale wayfinding techniques. Having appropriate wayfinding can be a determining factor on how frequently people return to Bellbrook. Wayfinding signage makes people feel comfortable with navigating an area and more often than not builds their impression of the environment. Excellent wayfinding will make people want to walk and be a part of Bellbrook.

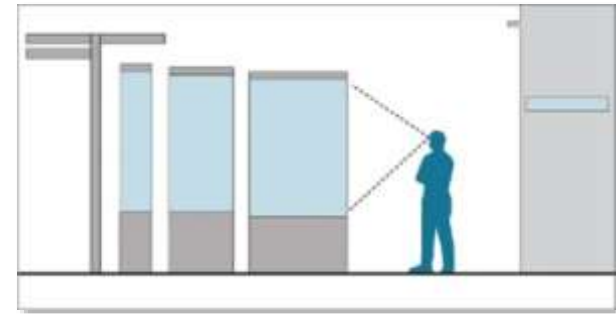
Place wayfinding maps near key destinations such as parks, public buildings, or markets. Maps should show important locations and travel time by bike & foot. Scale wayfinding elements to the human body, eye, and height .



Signage should keep everyone in mind including adults, children, and people using wheelchairs. Font type and size should be simple and big enough to be read by people who are visually impaired. Maps and signs should include braille characters, especially at key destinations and areas with high pedestrian volumes. Once again, local artists could play a role in design of the wayfinding signage elements along with materials used in sign construction. Design of wayfinding signage should follow Bellbrook's Brand, be uniform in design, and intuitive to ensure pedestrian comprehension while navigating Bellbrook.



**Figure 1.8 Walking Distances**  
Source: NACTO Urban Street Design Guide (2013)



**Figure 1.9 Example of Signage Height**  
Source: NACTO Urban Street Design Guide (2013)



**Figure 1.10 Example of Wayfinding Signage**  
Source: NACTO Urban Street Design Guide (2013)



## Transportation Plan

For the purposes of this comprehensive plan, the transportation element is comprehensive in scope including all modes of travel from active transportation, public transportation, and travel by auto. This plan places greater focus on active transportation because of its importance for creating connections and making downtown more pedestrian and bike friendly. It guide's public investment in improvements designed to make active transport more desirable, focused on the human scale, and safety. It is also an economic development tool in the scheme of downtown revitalization. If people cannot walk and ride, and neighborhoods are not connected, then downtown revitalization will be a challenging prospect.



### Goal 5: Connect Neighborhoods to Downtown and Encourage Active Modes of Travel

The walkable workshop was the first step at identifying issues to encourage active transportation by identifying strengths and weaknesses in the system and offering recommendations for inclusion in this plan. This plan takes those recommendations and incorporates them into the contexts of concepts and philosophies intended to reshape the built environment. To make Bellbrook more accepting of pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users. In this section, planning staff reviews concepts such as “Complete Streets”, connectivity, access management, and makes specific active transportation improvement recommendations.

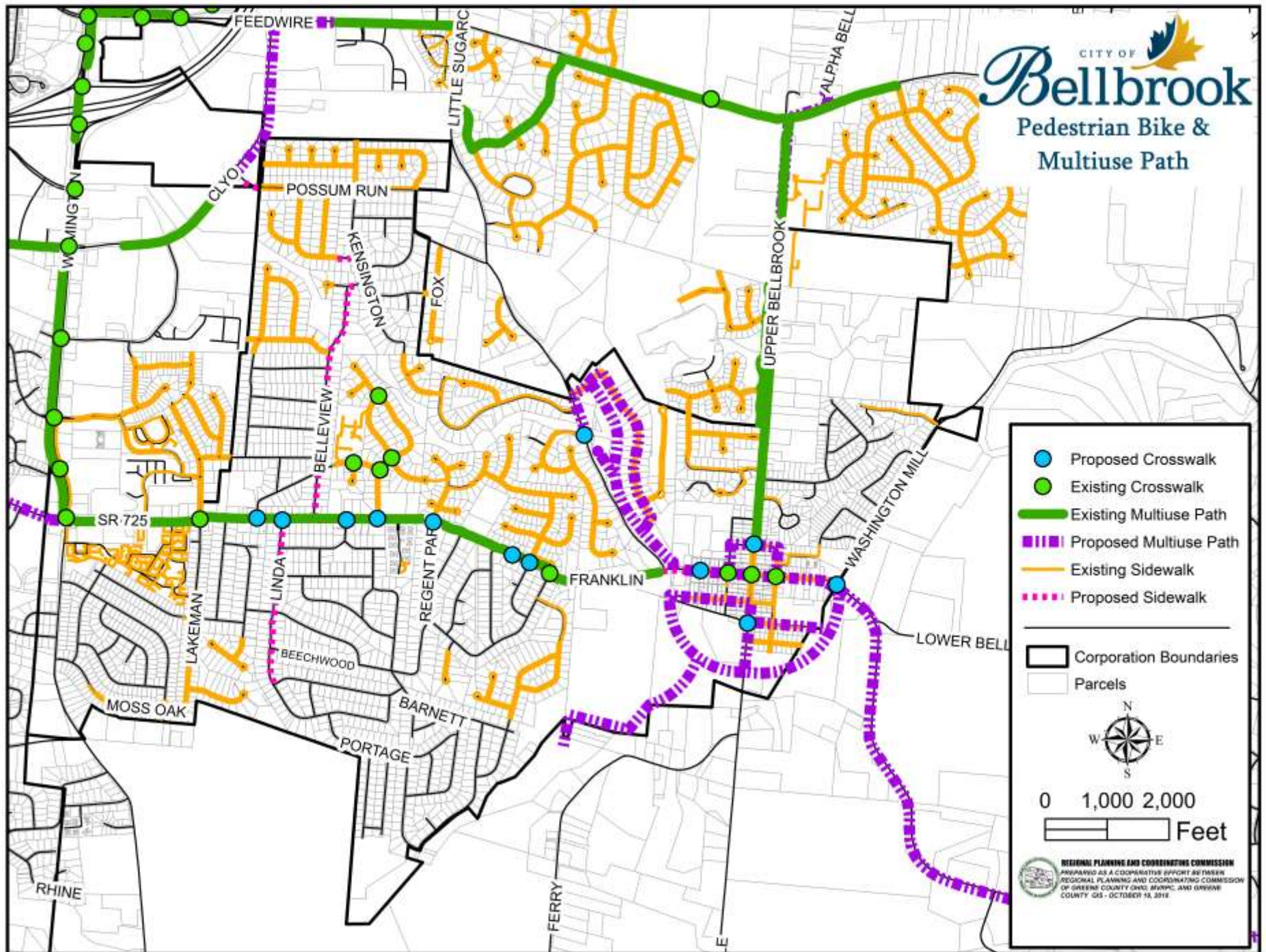
### *Objective 5.1: Implement the Pedestrian, Bike and Multi-use Paths*

As part of this plan update, various active transportation improvements were considered for inclusion. The proposed improvements described in this are considered technically feasible, logical, and supported by the public. The decision to include the projects described on the following pages was determined through extensive public involvement via surveys, public meetings, oversight committee meetings, and up-to-date data. It is important to note that these improvements are general alignments and it is recognized that as opportunities arise, changes can be made and projects reprioritized. The key is to be flexible when possible to achieve goals in an equitable manner. Other projects to consider are found in the Downtown Bellbrook Walkability Workshop attached to this plan.



*Bellbrook Open House November 5, 2018*







## Objective 5.2: Adopt a Complete Streets Policy

“Complete Streets” is a policy and a philosophy adopted by a community to consider all users and mode of transportation when building new streets, considering street upgrades, and retrofits. All users include pedestrians, motorists, bicyclists, transit, and people of all ages and abilities. All modes include walking, bikes, cars, trucks, and buses.

Over the past twenty years, City Planning and downtown revitalization efforts have certainly focused on “placemaking” as a philosophy and as process to create people-oriented places where one feels safe and comfortable. Places that instill a sense of health and well-being. Placemaking can be government driven, community driven, or a combination. Bellbrook has clearly chosen to reinvent and invigorate itself while maintaining its existing charm through a combined effort of citizens and government. Complete streets is a concept that promotes active, vibrant, and healthy corridors, creates connections to destinations, and combines placemaking with urban design and transportation. Individually, a complete street is a transportation corridor that caters to the needs of a community and prioritizes people over cars. Great streets attract people!

The National Complete Streets Coalition defines complete streets:

*“Complete Streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, and bike to work.”*

Furthermore, complete streets is a policy, as well as a philosophy, adopted by local government that is either binding or nonbinding, a policy that directs decision makers, planners, transportation engineers of a local community to design improvements within the right of way to meet the needs of all users of all abilities. This does not mean that the city engineer should redesign and retrofit each street to meet the policy because every situation is different. There may be physical barriers, land use, or right of way limitations that will prevent certain improvements. Complete streets should be an incremental approach done over time as opportunities for redesign arise. Local officials should focus at the site level such as a particular street, but also comprehensively establishing connections from neighborhoods to other destinations in the city such as downtown, to schools and to parks. Connecting people to places is at the center of active transportation and complete streets.


### Design Elements of Complete Streets

Traditionally people often think of streets as only the area over which a car travels or where we park our vehicle. While this is true, it is only part of the equation. Complete streets include the street area, which includes the physical street, storm drainage, and parking in the right of way, and extends to encompass the sidewalk area.




## Sidewalks and Curbs:


One of the most evident issues throughout downtown Bellbrook is the poor condition of many sidewalks and curb ramps, especially along Franklin Street. Observations from the walkability workshop participants include:




Inconsistencies in the condition of the sidewalks create hazardous walking conditions for pedestrians, as many are cracked or being damaged by tree roots. The lack of maintenance is also notable, as several sections are blocked by overgrown vegetation.




While the majority of Franklin Street has sidewalks, extending the sidewalks east to the intersection of Washington Mill Road as well as west to Little Sugarcreek Road would make the entire downtown more accessible.



Adding sidewalks along N. West Street would create safer access to businesses in Bellbrook Plaza.




Making some of the alleys between Bellbrook Plaza and Franklin Street more pedestrian/bike friendly would also provide more safety.




Several curb ramps are sinking and in need of improvement, especially at the Main Street/Franklin Street intersection. The intersection of N West Street and Franklin Street is also lacking a curb ramp.

Sidewalks are vital to vibrant, safe, and successful downtown and the urban fabric. NACTO recommends ADA compliant sidewalks on all urban streets. Land values increase where there is good pedestrian connectivity. Businesses thrive where the sidewalk and street mesh well together (NACTO Urban Street Design Guide 2013)


The sidewalk area is further divided into zones or typologies (in commercial areas) beginning with:




**Frontage Zone** extends a minimum of 1-2ft (ideally 5-10ft) from the storefront and allows space for access, sidewalk sales, café seating, or decorative elements such as flower pots



**Pedestrian Zone** is an area 5-6ft in width to accommodate unobstructed walking



**Furniture/Curb Zone** is an area for elements such as trashcans, light poles, parking meters, transit shelters, benches and tree/flower plantings. It also serves as a buffer between pedestrians and vehicles.



**Enhancement/Buffer Zone** that could accommodate stormwater facilities, street plantings, curb extensions, parklets, or parking





Figure 2.1 Typology of Sidewalk Zone in a Typical Small Town Commercial District Source: *Form-Based Codes Insititute (frombasedcodes.org)*

The width of the sidewalk zone varies from city to city and from street to street within a city. Take great care when delineating the areas of the sidewalk zone. Even with adequate width in the sidewalk zone, individual businesses can push the envelope without adequate regulations. Figure 2.2 shows how poor management of the frontage zone can result in what is clearly an intrusion into the pedestrian zone. There is barely enough space for a wheelchair to navigate around the landscape timbers. The owner built the structure for an outdoor eating space for a new restaurant.

Removing obstacles to pedestrian movement should be a priority. Relocation of utility poles or other utilities may be necessary in some locations. Officials must be certain to separate sidewalks from the street both vertically and horizontally for safe pedestrian use. One should place Sidewalk lighting, plantings, signage and street furniture outside the pedestrian zone.



Figure 2.2 Poor Management of Frontage Zone

The curb zone is for street furniture, lighting on a pedestrian scale, benches, kiosks, bike parking and utilities. This zone provides a place for pedestrians to relax, and a place to meet. Curb areas could include flow through planters or rain gardens such as the one shown below in figure 2.3 The north side of Franklin Avenue just west of the intersection with Main Street could benefit from Curb Plantings or Flow through Planters.

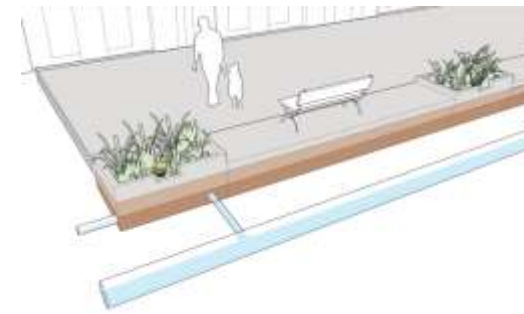


Figure 2.3 NACTO Example of Flow Through Planter Source: *NACTO Urban Street Design Guide (2013)*



## Intersections and Crosswalks:

Pedestrian crossings in Downtown Bellbrook should be improved to ensure pedestrian safety when crossing the street. Observations made during the walkability workshop made it evident that the quantity and condition of highly identifiable crosswalks are lacking.

### Observations include:





-  Adding crosswalks on Franklin Street at Washington Mill Road, the Library, at Dot's and at the intersection with Little Sugarcreek Road should be considered.
-  Main Street also lacks well-marked pedestrian crossings. Crosswalks are needed at Maple and Walnut Streets.
-  Existing crosswalks, especially at West Street and Franklin Street, need to be restriped and marked for better visibility.
-  Raised crosswalks at certain locations along Franklin Street could be a safety option to make drivers slow down.



Figure 2.4 Crosswalk lacking signage and a curb ramp at West and Franklin

When redesigning intersections, officials should consider removing the existing narrow striping used at wide intersections. Good pedestrian crosswalks at busy intersections are as wide or wider than the pedestrian zone and properly aligned with ADA compliant ramps. Ladder, zebra, or continental crosswalk markings are recommended over the standard markings. Stop bars should be placed at least 8-ft from the crosswalk for additional safety.

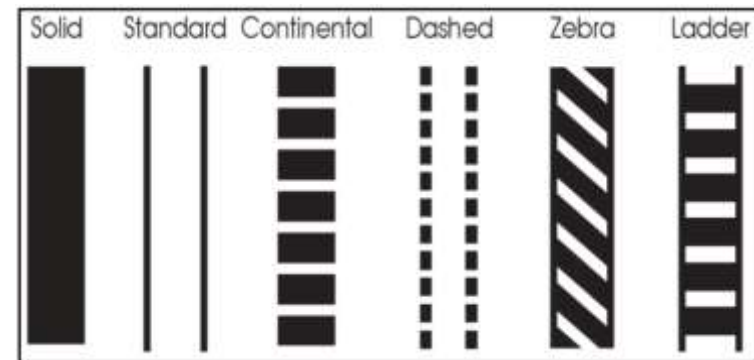


Figure 2.5 Crosswalk Types  
Source: Form-Based Codes Institute ([frombasedcodes.org](http://frombasedcodes.org))

Midblock crosswalks are crossings for pedestrians to reach destinations in areas where no signalization, stop signs, or intersections exist. Medians or safety islands with vertical crosswalk types with adequate signage can provide safer crossings. Figures 2.8 and 2.9 shows the concept before and after retrofit.



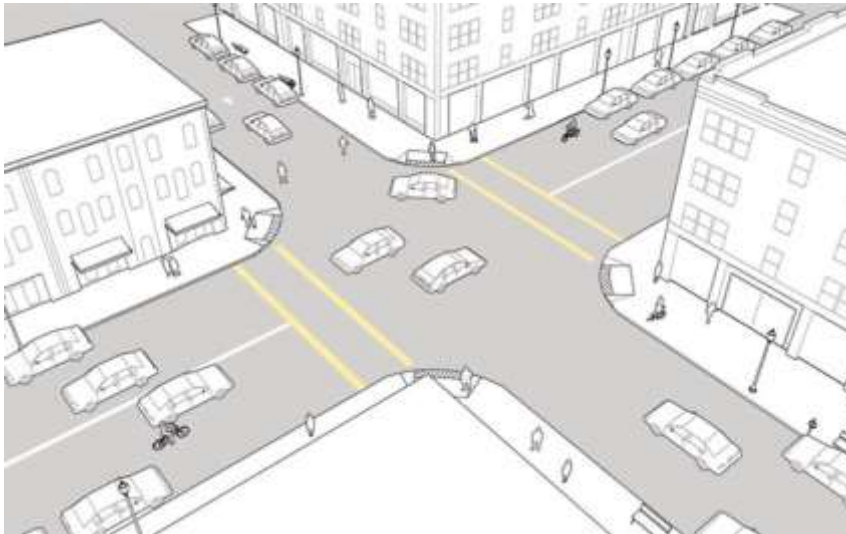


Figure 2.6 Before Restriping

Source: NACTO Urban Street Design Guide (2013)

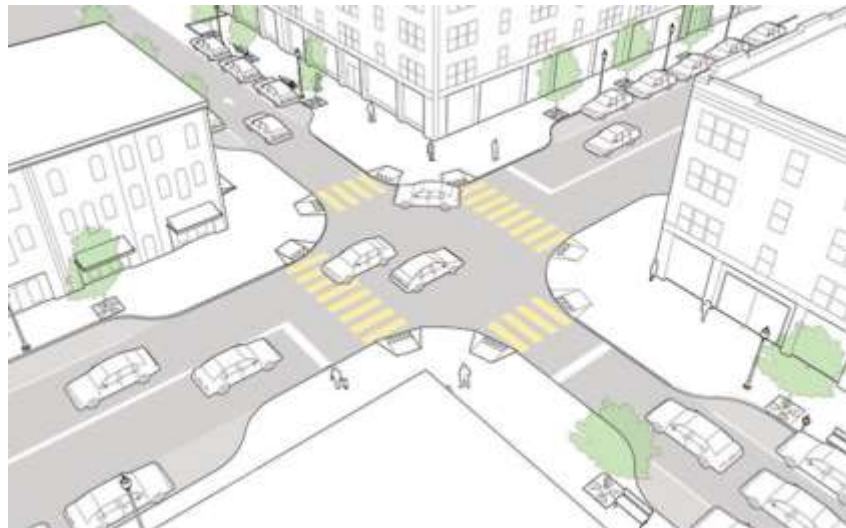


Figure 2.7 After Restriping

Source: NACTO Urban Street Design Guide (2013)



Figure 2.8 Before Midblock Crosswalk

Source: NACTO Urban Street Design Guide (2013)

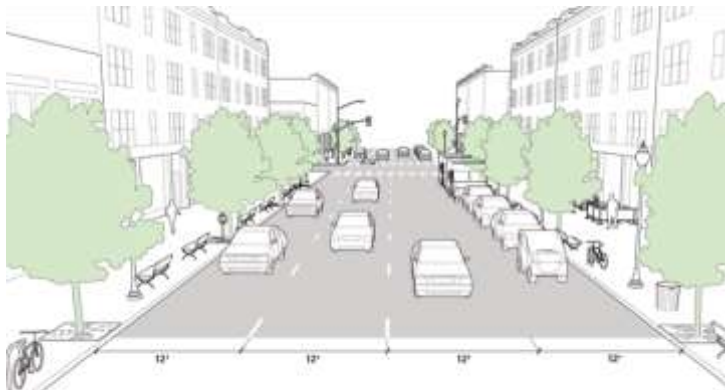


Figure 2.9 After Midblock

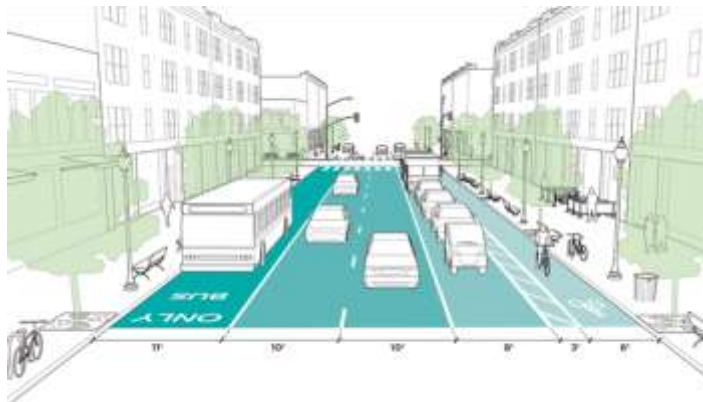
Source: NACTO Urban Street Design Guide (2013)



Lane width is important when considering changes to streets. Narrower street lanes reduce speed and accidents. Officials must strike a balance however between the needs of large truck (through traffic at the intersection of Franklin and Main Street) and that of pedestrian and bicyclists. Typical lane width for downtown areas is 9 to 10-ft while for streets with heavy truck traffic 11 to 12 foot lanes may be more appropriate. **Figure 2.10** and **Figure 2.11** shows before and after redesign of a three lane one-way downtown street.



*Figure 2.10 Before Redesign with 12-ft Lanes and 12-ft Parking*  
Source: NACTO Urban Street Design Guide (2013)



*Figure 2.11 After Redesign Using 10-ft Lanes with bike lane*  
Source: NACTO Urban Street Design Guide (2013)

## Curb Extensions For Traffic Calming:

Curb extensions act to calm the flow of traffic creating safer crossings and to establish bigger areas for street furniture, rest areas, trashcans, and street plantings as well as bus stops. This report will cover three types of extensions: Chicane, Pinch point, and Gateway.



**Chicanes** (Figure 2.12) are offset curb extensions along the course of a roadway. There are many design options for chicanes including alternating parking zones.



*Figure 2.12 Chicane or Offset Street*  
Source: NACTO Urban Street Design Guide (2013)



**Pinch Points** (Figure 2.13) are added to mid-block to reduce speed, create additional public gathering space, or to create a mid-block pedestrian or bicycle crossing.





Figure 2.13 Pinch Point

Source: NACTO Urban Street Design Guide (2013)



**Gateways** (Figure 2.14) are used to physically differentiate the entrance to a lower class roadway and a transition to a lower speed.

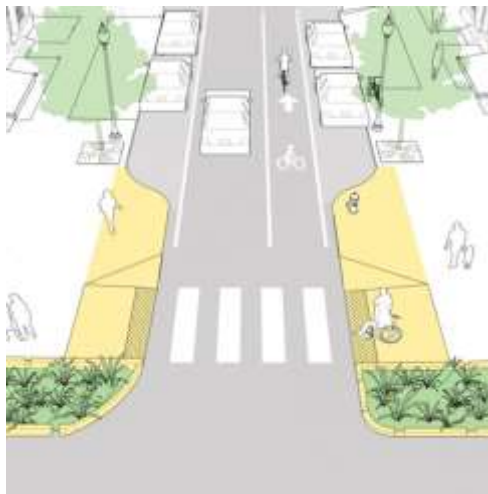


Figure 2.14 Gateway Concept

Source: NACTO Urban Street Design Guide (2013)

## Parking:

The walkability workshop indicated that for those coming into Bellbrook from other areas, parking can be a problem. Lack of an adequate number of public parking spaces causes a headache for visitors and discourages potential businesses from operating in downtown. Observations include:



Additional public parking lots would be beneficial. One suggestion was to look into the feasibility of adding parking in the now vacant area west of the Bellbrook Plaza and creating a better pedestrian gathering space in front of the Plaza.



On-street parking spaces should be individually marked and signs should be added for a better understanding of where parking is allowed and restricted within downtown.



Along Franklin Street, chicanes with diagonal back-in parking zones that alternate between sides of the street might create more parking and help to regulate traffic flow.



Downtown businesses might benefit from implementing shared parking agreements, allowing for private parking to be used publicly during certain hours.





*Back-in angle parking allows for a safer, more efficient use of space in Dayton*

## Biking and Bike Lanes:

The Walkability workshop showed that the bike route that runs along Franklin Street does not provide bikers with designated bike lanes. Instead, they must share lanes with traffic, creating potential safety issues. Observations include:



Bike and car spaces need to be better defined along Franklin Street.



There is a general lack of bike infrastructure around downtown. Adding bike racks would encourage bikers to spend time in the city rather than just passing through, as well as entice more residents from nearby neighborhoods to walk or use bikes instead using cars for a downtown trip.



Shared lane markings (or Sharrows) help identify designated bike routes and ease confusion for bicyclists and motorists alike. Unfortunately, in most cases where less than three lanes exist, shared lane markings may be the only choice available to transportation officials. All options for dedicated bike lanes should be reviewed prior to deciding on a shared lane. The shared lane marking is a pavement marking with a variety of uses to support a complete bikeway network. It is not a facility type and should not be considered a substitute for bike lanes, cycle tracks, or other separation treatments where these types of facilities are otherwise warranted or space permits. The MUTCD outlines guidance for shared lane markings in section 9C.07. Colored pavement within a bicycle lane increases the visibility of the facility, identifies potential areas of conflict, and reinforces priority to bicyclists in conflict areas and in areas with pressure for illegal parking. Colored pavement can be utilized either as a corridor treatment along the length of a bike lane or cycle track, or as a spot treatment, such as a bike box, conflict area, or intersection crossing marking. Color can be applied along the entire length of bike lane or cycle track to increase the overall visibility of the facility. Consistent application of color across a bikeway corridor is important to promote clear understanding for all users.



## Bike Lane and Sharrow Examples



Figure 2.15 Sharrows example from Brookline, MA  
Source: NACTO Urban Street Design Guide (2013)



Figure 2.16 Sharrows example from New York, NY  
Source: NACTO Urban Street Design Guide (2013)



Figure 2.17 NACTO Buffered Bike Lane Example  
Source: NACTO Urban Street Design Guide (2013)



Figure 2.18 NACTO Conventional Bike Lane Example  
Source: NACTO Urban Street Design Guide (2013)



## Streetscape and Connection Improvements:

Improving the pedestrian spaces within Downtown Bellbrook would allow for a more enjoyable walking experience.

Streetscape improvements should focus on safety, lighting, shade, seating and furniture, and crossings. These five key elements of the streetscape are essential to pedestrian comfort and even safety.

A good lighting strategy for pedestrian comfort is necessary in a downtown environment. Good pedestrian scaled lighting can extend the hours of operation of businesses and certainly improves pedestrian comfort and safety. Do not forget that in addition to sidewalk lighting, street lighting for vehicles is required for safety of both driver and pedestrian.

Shading should be a primary goal for streetscape planning during the summer months for consumer and pedestrian comfort. Select tree types and tree wells that limit damage from roots while at the same time helps reduce runoff. The City should seek incentives for businesses to provide awnings and shaded sidewalk cafes that do not impede pedestrian movement.

Street furniture can be important in attracting people and businesses to downtown. Common street furniture items include: public benches, attractive trash receptacles, public tables (with an artistic touch) flower pots or curbside planters that aid with storm water quality, public fountains, and street clocks.

Improving pedestrian connections within the city would create easier access and mobility around the city.











*Figure 2.19 Example of Lighting and Streetscape*  
Source: NACTO Urban Street Design Guide (2013)



*Example of Street Furniture Lebanon, Ohio*



## Observations from the Walkable Community Workshop include:



-  Finding a place to sit along Franklin Street can be challenging. Additional public benches and landscaping are needed.
-  Some areas of Franklin Street are not lined with trees, resulting in a lack of shade for pedestrians.
-  Several businesses have opportunities to improve their outdoor seating areas.
-  Several areas in downtown could benefit from simple pedestrian connection improvements, such as the connection from the Library parking lot to an alley that is currently blocked with a gate as seen in Figure 2.20.
-  A pedestrian path connecting the apartments east of Ryder Court to East Franklin Street would also be beneficial.
-  A currently unused, unmarked pathway from Bellbrook Park to Pavilion Lane could be upgraded, creating an alternate route into downtown.
-  The subdivisions surrounding downtown have poor pedestrian connections to downtown. Exploring ways to improve these connections would encourage more people to walk to downtown, decreasing auto congestion and demand for parking.
-  Lighting is currently geared towards motor traffic. Adding decorative lighting at the pedestrian level could improve pedestrian safety and add to the streetscape.



*Figure 2.20 Potential pedestrian connection at the Library*

## Parks and Accessibility:

Downtown Bellbrook is within walking distance of acres of preserved parkland, but lacks attractive pedestrian connections to them. It is recommended that Bellbrook capitalize on the parks and greenspace surrounding it by exploring better bike and pedestrian connections.

-  Driving is the only easy way to access many of the parks around Bellbrook. Improving pedestrian access could benefit both the parks and the downtown area by making it a starting and stopping point for recreational trips.
-  A multi-use path from the current sidewalk ending at Washington Mill Road around the south end of Bellbrook, looping back up to South and Maple Streets with connections to the Sackett-Wright Park, Spring Lakes Park and the Sugarcreek Reserve could be explored.





*Bellbrook Park on the North Edge of Downtown Bellbrook*



Pedestrian connections from Magee Park to downtown could also create a linkage to the subdivisions along Little Sugarcreek Road.



*Magee Park on Little Sugarcreek Road, Bellbrook Ohio*

Source: Bellbrook Sugarcreek Park District  
([www.bellbrook-sugarcreek-parks.org](http://www.bellbrook-sugarcreek-parks.org))



## Sample Complete Streets Policy

WHEREAS, the (City/County) recognizes the need to accommodate all modes of transportation within the public right of way, including travel by pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit users; and,

WHEREAS, the (City/County) seeks to meet the transportation needs of all its citizen by providing street networks that safely connect to all properties, creating a more livable and welcoming community to all citizen, regardless of age or ability; and,

WHEREAS, Complete Streets are achieved through single projects and through a series of smaller improvements or maintenance activities over time; and,

WHEREAS, the (City/County) will make every effort to connect neighborhoods to business, vital services, government, schools, and shopping via networks that accommodate all users; and

WHEREAS, there are exceptions to this policy where cost of providing accommodation are disproportionate to probable use; or when not permitted by law; or where motorists are the only users; and

WHEREAS, design criteria should be consistent with latest design standards available from sources such as the American Association of State Highway Officials, Ohio Department of Transportation, Americans with Disabilities Act, and Institution of Transportation Engineers etc.; and

WHEREAS. The implementation of this policy should reflect the context and character of the surrounding built and natural environments, and enhance the appearance of such



## *Objective 5.3: Adopt a Access Management Best Practices*

### Access Management

Driveway access, especially in the context of “Downtown” can create conflicts with through traffic and with pedestrians if spaced too closely to a major intersection. Driveways take up valuable parking space too. Decision makers should keep the number of driveways along downtown business frontage to a minimum, and as redevelopment occurs, eliminate driveways by using alleys or shared access. Similar to how pedestrians have to cross at crosswalks, cars should cross at strategic locations. In addition, driveways should only be as wide as necessary to ensure the usefulness and safety of sidewalks. Driveway location and design should support a safe and enjoyable pedestrian experience in Downtown Bellbrook.

Access management is a set of design principles and policies that control the number, location, and type of vehicular access points onto the public road system. Access management, within the context of downtown revitalization and walkability, emphasizes shared driveways where possible to limit conflict points, limiting access to certain turn movements, provision of adequate vehicle stacking length, good intersection design, and minimizes barriers to pedestrians. Access management is simply a set of tools that traffic engineers and land use planners use to help maintain the design capacity and safety of a roadway on the functional classification hierarchy ([Figure 2.22](#) on page 40).



*Source: Pexels.com Stock Photo*

**Relationship to Existing Development in the Community**  
Access management is a long-term solution to a built-out community such as Bellbrook. As redevelopment occurs, Bellbrook can implement access management principles through a combination of policies including access management, zoning and complete streets.

Applying these principles with the cooperation of downtown landowners will be crucial to provide for additional public on-street parking. Bellbrook should consider public/private partnerships, as redevelopment occurs to modify some access points in downtown, or under the right circumstances removal of the access.

On-street parking in Bellbrook’s downtown is limited in part due to the number and spacing of access points. Fitting parking spaces between driveways is possible but it also creates safety issues with line of sight while exiting and limits view of pedestrians upon entry. Practically the entire north side of Franklin Street in the downtown area has no on street parking due to the predominance of driveways to commercial businesses. The community must strike a balance between vehicle access, parking, and safety.






## Access Management in Downtown Bellbrook




There are many areas in downtown Bellbrook where driveways could be eliminated to improve access and allow on street parking in a safe manner. Good access management will help to bring people downtown and remove the headache and frustration often caused by poor access management and sight distances. Listed below are some of the suggestions for improved access in downtown Bellbrook as property redevelops over the years. It should be noted that the suggestions below are flexible and are dependent on land owner cooperation. As redevelopment occurs city review agencies should consider access management best practices in order to minimize access points in downtown and improve pedestrian safety.

### Access Management Suggestions

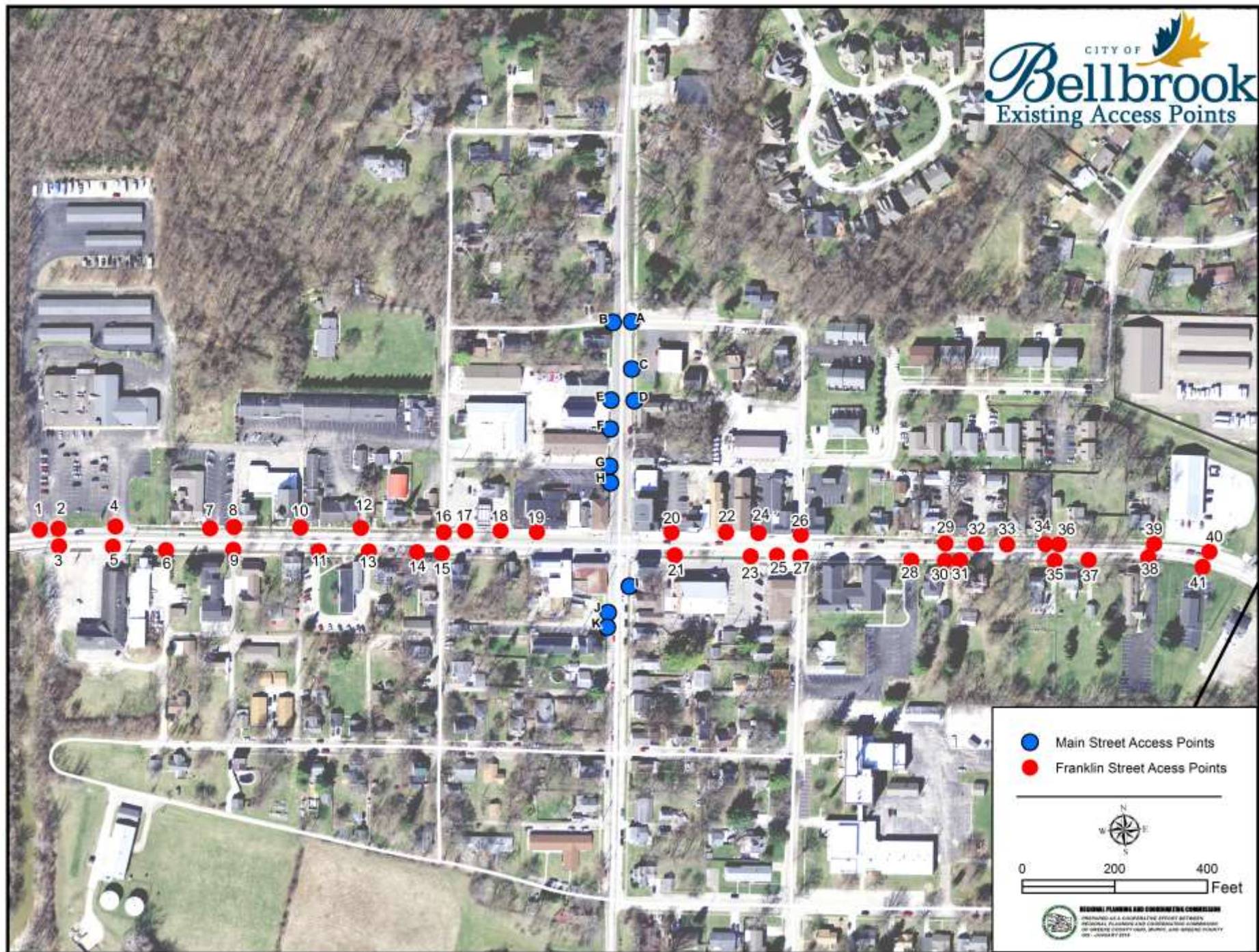
*(see Existing Access Points map)*

-  Access point H on Main Street should be eliminated. Planning staff suggest that access point G be used instead. Access point G is the alley that runs parallel with West Franklin Street. The parking lot adjacent to point H would need to align parking spaces in a straight manner to ensure flow in and out of the parking lot. The current alley doesn't allow for through traffic however, with a slight widening of the alley traffic could enter/exit on North West Street or North Main Street. Eliminating the need for access point H. Underground utilities could free up valuable space along this alley.
-  Access point F should be eliminated, entrance to parking in that area could be utilized through access E.
-  Access points 1, 2, and 3 (across the street from access 1 and 2) should be eliminated especially since

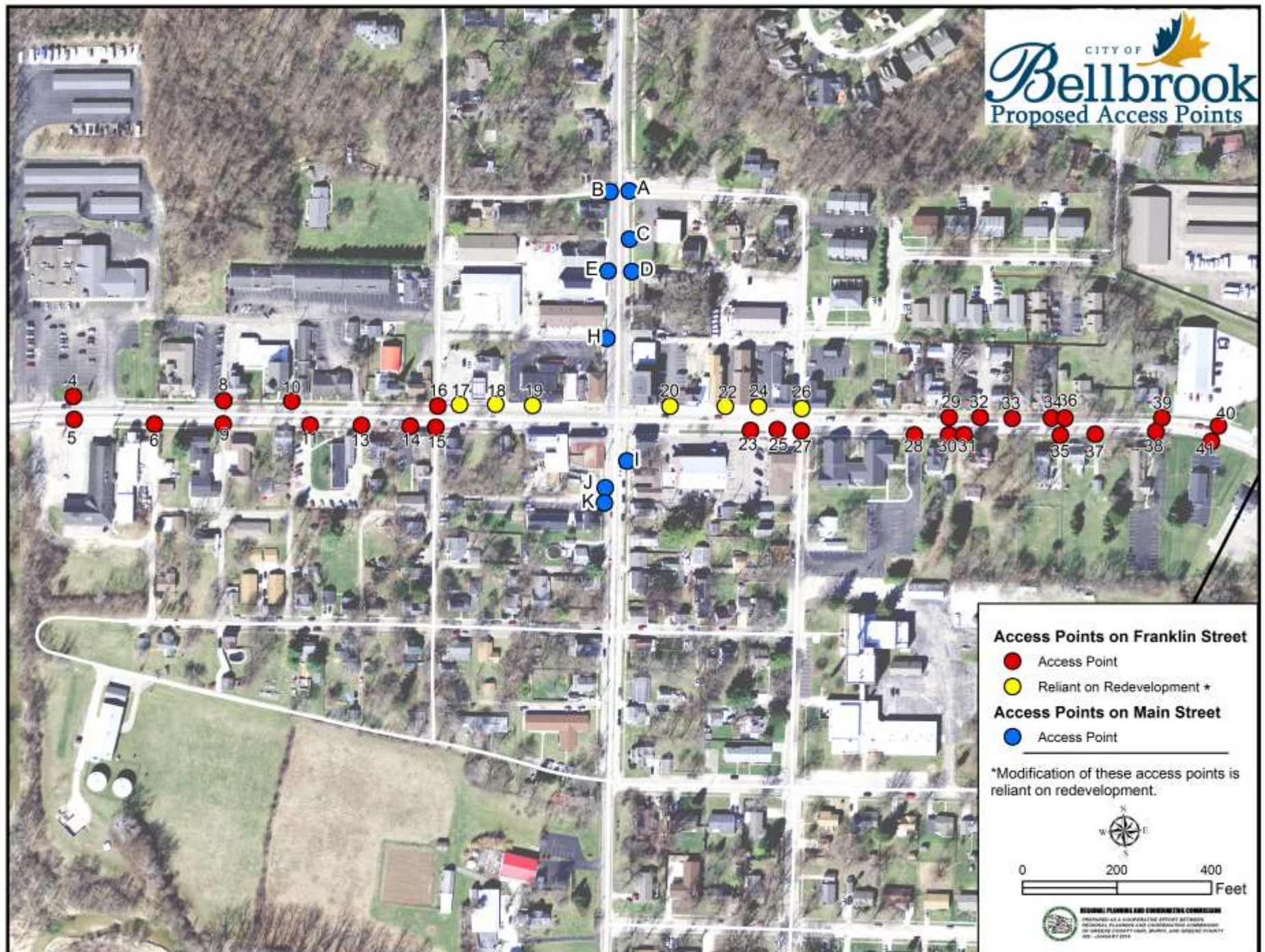
these particular access points are at the end of a curb. Access points 4 and 5 should be aligned across from one another and be placed in a more central location. Removal these access points also allows for the City to align the sidewalk to connect to the proposed path connection along Little Sugarcreek Road.

-  Access point 7 should be eliminated. Parking spaces in that area would need to be aligned to allow traffic from access 8 to enter from the rear of the lot and exit either through access point 4 or back out through point 8. Access point 17, 18, and 19 should be removed as redevelopment occurs. Access to any business or building in that area of Franklin Street would access parking off of North West Street or via individual access by the alley that exits at point G. This will free up on-street parking on the north side of Franklin Street from the alley intersect with Main Street.
-  Access point 21 should be removed with access to the municipal building being through access point 23 and the parking spaces straightened. Removal of the planting strip in front of the municipal building would allow for additional on-street parking with spaces approximately 7-10 feet wide.
-  Access points 20, 22, 24, and 26 should be addressed as redevelopment occurs. The current number of access points isn't ideal, and restricts on street parking. However with the current configuration of buildings and parking lots, little can be done to reduce access points and gain on-street parking spaces in the short-term.











## Common Access Management Best Practices:

Figure 2.21 below illustrates the basic concepts of access management in a typical commercial district including:

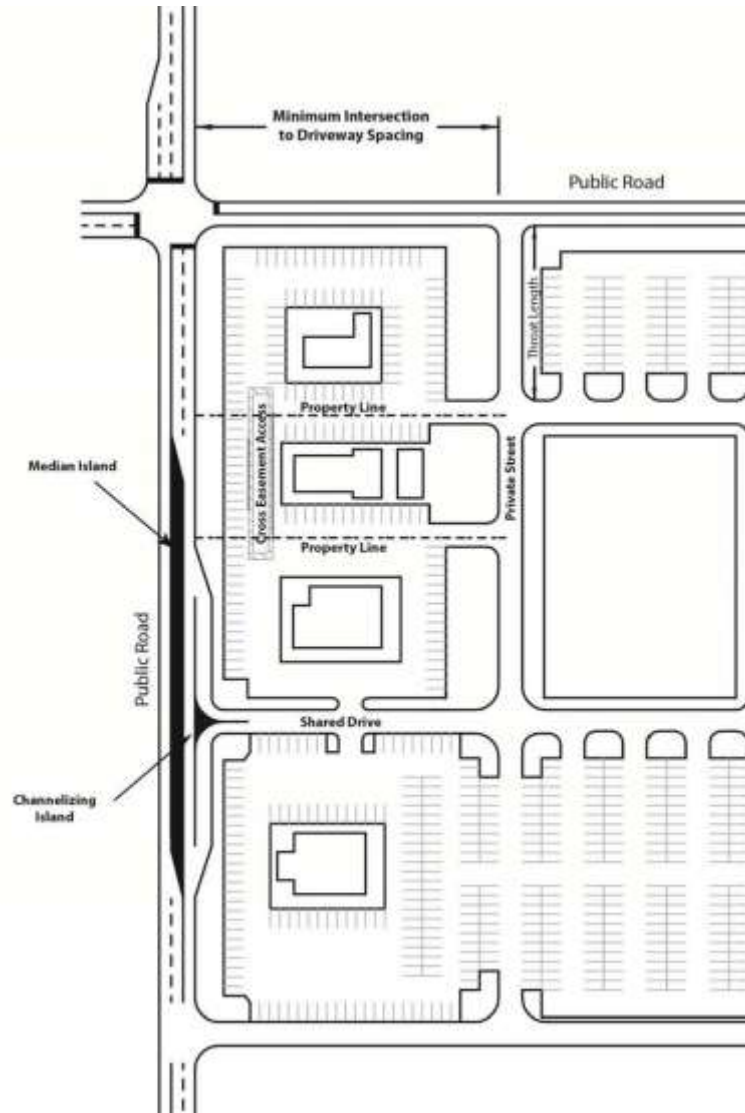


Figure 2.21 Concepts of Access Management

Source: Adapted From Franklin County Access Management Regulations



**Minimum Intersection to Driveway Spacing (Corner Clearance)** - provides for the minimum distance between an intersection and a driveway along an arterial or collector street.



**Throat Length** – establishes the minimum distance (usually 100-ft on arterial or collector) from the public road to the entry to a parking lot. This technique ensures that vehicles entering a parking lot do not back up into the public street.



**Cross Easement Access** – Are developed for interior access between parcels within a development. These are reciprocal easements between landowners. These do not affect parking.



**Median Island** – Used to separate opposing traffic and at times to prevent access to one side of a street.



**Channelizing Island** – Forces traffic in a certain direction or turning movement such as a right-in and/or right-out.



**Shared Driveways** – Multiple parcels utilize a common driveway as the primary access onto an arterial or collector street minimizing the number of access point.



**Driveway Design** – Driveways should be designed to provide a level continuous sidewalk and not interfere with pedestrian traffic. Driveways to individual properties in the Special Downtown Overlay District should be discouraged. Primary access should be through alleys or via on-street parking.



## Objective 5.4: Adopt a Roadway Functional Classification System

Roadways serve two general purposes and at times these purposes conflict with one another---access vs mobility. Mobility is prioritized on arterials such as I-675 or US-35. Collectors strike a balance between through traffic and access via local properties or streets. Local streets accept a majority of access and local traffic. However, the reality is that many roads serve both purposes and maintain significant through traffic and access to property. Franklin Street and Main Street are no different. Franklin Street serves as an arterial for through traffic and for local access. Main Street serves as a collector with a higher degree of access over through-traffic. However, a special condition exists in Bellbrook in that the core of Downtown exists at this primary intersection. In the past, the first solution offered to fix apparent conflicts of through-traffic and access such as this is to build a wider road with turn lanes. However, the more cost effective and beneficial solution to Bellbrook is to implement access management best practices along with other recommendations from this plan over the long term. This is not to say that realignment and widening of certain segments of Franklin and Main is not beneficial. To the contrary, a few feet here and there could make a huge difference for fitting a bike lane for example.

**Roadway Functional Classification** aids planners and officials with access decisions and funding priorities. Functional classification does affect local project funding through the Federal Highway Administration and ODOT

Funding. For the purposes of this plan staff utilized existing ODOT Functional Classifications for consistency and added special classifications for specific roadways in the City of Bellbrook.



Figure 2.22 Basic Roadway Functional Classification  
(Source: Virginia Department of Transportation)

## ODOT Functional Classification

**Interstates** are the highest classification of Arterials and are designed and constructed with mobility and long-distance travel in mind.

Example: I-675



**Principle Arterials** serve major activity centers, highest traffic volume corridors and longest trip demands. Carry high proportion of total urban travel on minimum of mileage. Interconnect and provide continuity for major rural corridors to accommodate trips entering and leaving urban area and movements through the urban area. Serve demand for intra-area travel between the central business district and outlying residential areas.

Example: Franklin (Wilmington Pike to Main Street)

**Minor Arterials** provide service for trips of moderate length and offer connectivity to the higher Principal Arterial system. In an urban context, they interconnect and augment the higher Principal Arterial system and provide intra-community continuity.

Example: Franklin Street (from Main Street eastward to SR-725)

**Collectors** serve the critical role of gathering and channeling traffic from Local Roads to the Arterial network. Collectors are broken down into two categories: Major Collectors and Minor Collectors. The determination of whether a roadway is a Major Collector or Minor Collector is frequently one of the biggest challenges in roadway functional classification. The distinctions are often subtle. Generally, Major Collector routes are longer; have fewer connecting driveways; have higher posted speed limits; are spaced at greater intervals; have higher annual average traffic volumes; and may have more travel lanes than Minor

Examples:

North Main (Major Collector)

South Main (Minor Collector)

**Local Roads** account for the largest percentage of all roadways in terms of mileage. They are not intended for use in long distance travel due to their provision of direct access to abutting land. They are often designed to discourage through traffic. Local Roads are often classified by default. In other words, once all Arterial and Collector roadways have been identified, all remaining roadways are classified as Local Roads.

## Bellbrook Functional Classification

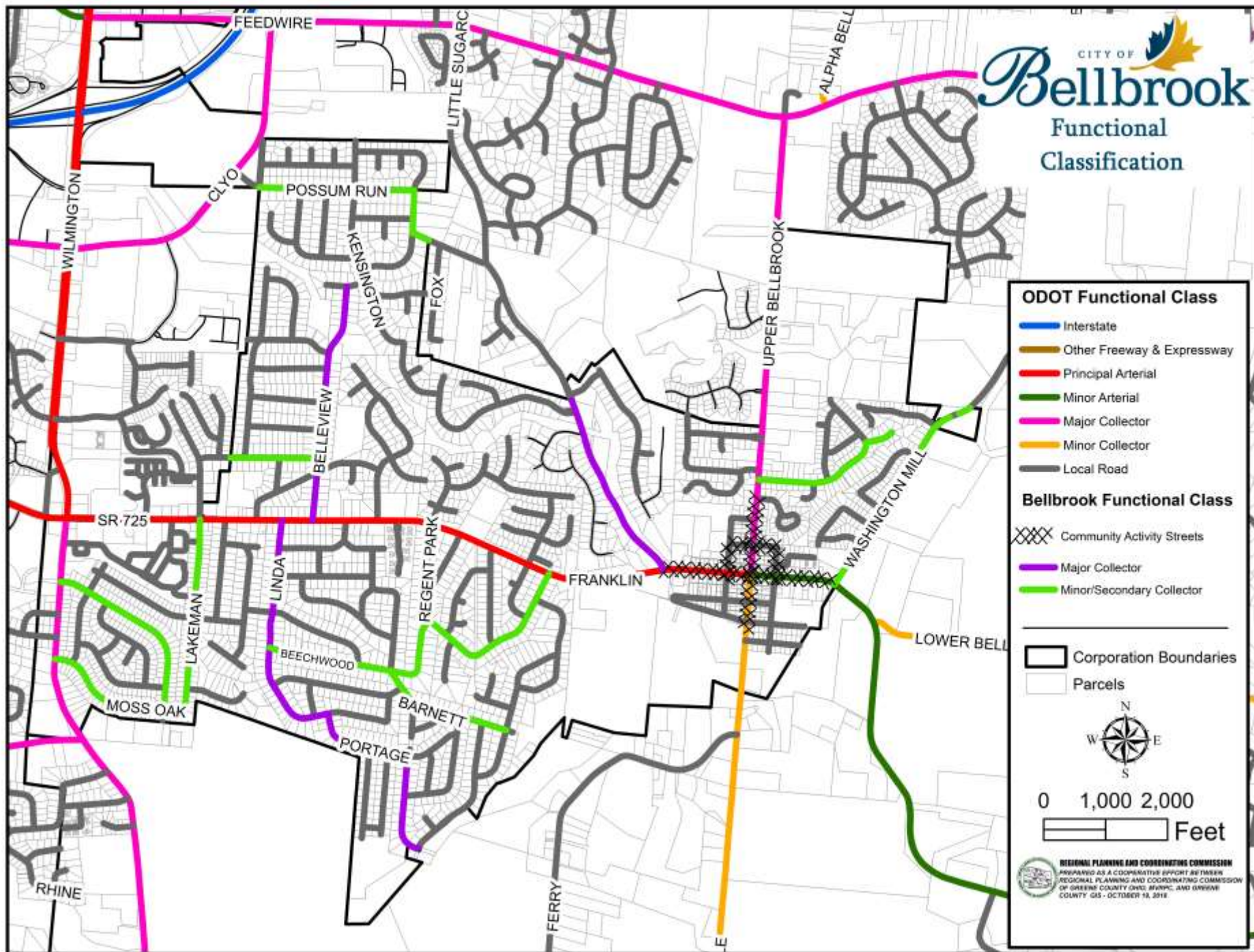
**Major Collector:** Bellbrook identified certain streets that hold great importance to creating connections from residential areas to the downtown areas. These streets are residential in nature but also provide for through traffic from numerous connecting residential blocks. These streets are targeted for sidewalk and other upgrades as needed to better connect these large neighborhood districts to the multiuse path.

Example: Belleview Drive, Linda Drive

**Community Activity Streets** are “Destination Streets” These streets include Franklin and Main Street within the Downtown District. This is a special designation by the City of Bellbrook, which recognizes ODOT’s functional classification but also recognizes that these thoroughfares are important to making downtown a destination for people. Treatment of these streets should focus on mixed-use, social interaction, pedestrians, and bikes, community events, and slower auto speeds while still moving traffic to achieve ODOT’s functional classification. It is a balancing act!

Examples: Franklin Street (within the downtown district), Main Street (from South Street to Pavilion, North West Street and Walnut Street







## Land Use Plan

### Existing Land Use

**Figure 3.1** illustrates the total number of acres occupied by each land use category. Land use change was determined by comparing 1975 land use data to more current land use data to derive percent change in developed versus undeveloped land.

As the City has built out, the total undeveloped land area decreased drastically since 1975 due in large part to subdivision development. Bellbrook's undeveloped acreage decreased from 1,010 acres to just 194 acres. A large portion of the remaining undeveloped acreage is a 76-acre area located just west of downtown.

Residential use is most common representing 70% of all land area. Single-family use makes up 96% of all residential use. In downtown where density is higher, a mixture of housing options are available with single family, two family, multi family, and mixed-use dwellings. To the north and west, this variety in housing options decreases and single-family homes are the most dominant land use.

Two-family homes account for only 0.4% of land use in the City. All 8.3 acres of this land use are within the downtown area, and a large portion of this acreage can be credited to a 6.5 acre parcel along North West Street. Though the total acreage of two-family homes has risen since 1975, we can assume that the downtown area has actually lost a number of these homes. Not accounting for the 6.5-acre plat, the remaining 1.8 acres is less than the 3.7 acres found in 1975.

Multi-Family dwellings appear in pockets all around Bellbrook. To the west, the Mill Pond Apartment complex and the Wentworth Village Condominiums account for the over three quarters of this land use. In downtown, the largest development of multi-family structures are concentrated along Ryder Court. Due to these large-scale developments, multi-family land use has grown by 44.3 acres since 1975.

Mixed Use represents the smallest land use in area at only 0.6 acres and located along Franklin Street in downtown. A small number of buildings in this area include commercial space at the street level and residential units on the second floor or in the back of the building. Developments like these fit well in the downtown area, where the abundant alleys and side streets can benefit from additional utilization. Having this mixture of land uses within the downtown core, such as this, encourages a strong, walkable downtown core.

Commercial land uses occupy 63 acres, or 3.4% of the overall land area. An increase of about 48 commercial acres has occurred between 1975 and 2016, mostly along the far edges of downtown and along the S.R. 725 corridor to the west. The denser commercial area in downtown only counts for a small portion of the total commercial land use, with more large-scale developments dominating in the other areas of Bellbrook. At the western edge of the city, acres of strip commercial development are a continuation of the large commercial district along Wilmington Pike. Closer to downtown, the Dollar General, Dot's Supermarket and two storage facilities account for the other majority of this commercial growth.



Since 1975, the total acres of Public and Semipublic land use has grown from about 150 acres to almost 214. This 64-acre growth is mostly due to a large rise in governmental service facilities and green space. Governmental services saw a rise of 54 acres, due mostly to the addition of city service facilities downtown and a 38-acre wellfield along West South Street. The addition of Sackett-Wright Park, Possum Run Park and several other green spaces make up a 41.3-acre growth in green space.

Though governmental services and green space both grew, schools and churches have decreased since 1975. The closure of the school on South East Street accounted for an 8-acre decrease in school acreage. Although new churches were built since 1975, the closure of a former church camp where the Highview Terrace subdivision has been developed is the primary cause of a 26-acre decrease in this land use acreage.

Utilities and Right-of-Way have both seen an increase since 1975, with utility acres almost doubling. Dayton Power & Light and Vectren Energy use 14 acres along West Franklin Street for operations (double the 7 acres that were under this land use in 1975). Due to suburban infill along the western corridor of the City, Right-of-Way has increased from 167 acres to 235 acres.

Outside of Bellbrook, land uses vary greatly. The most dominant land use around the City is residential, reflecting that of the City itself. To the north, large single-family developments are present along Feedwire Road and Upper Bellbrook Road. To the east and south, there are a large number of vacant, agricultural and green space mixed with low-density residential homes on multiple-acre lots exist. The west side of the study area primarily contains a mixture of commercial, single-family and multi-family land uses. This

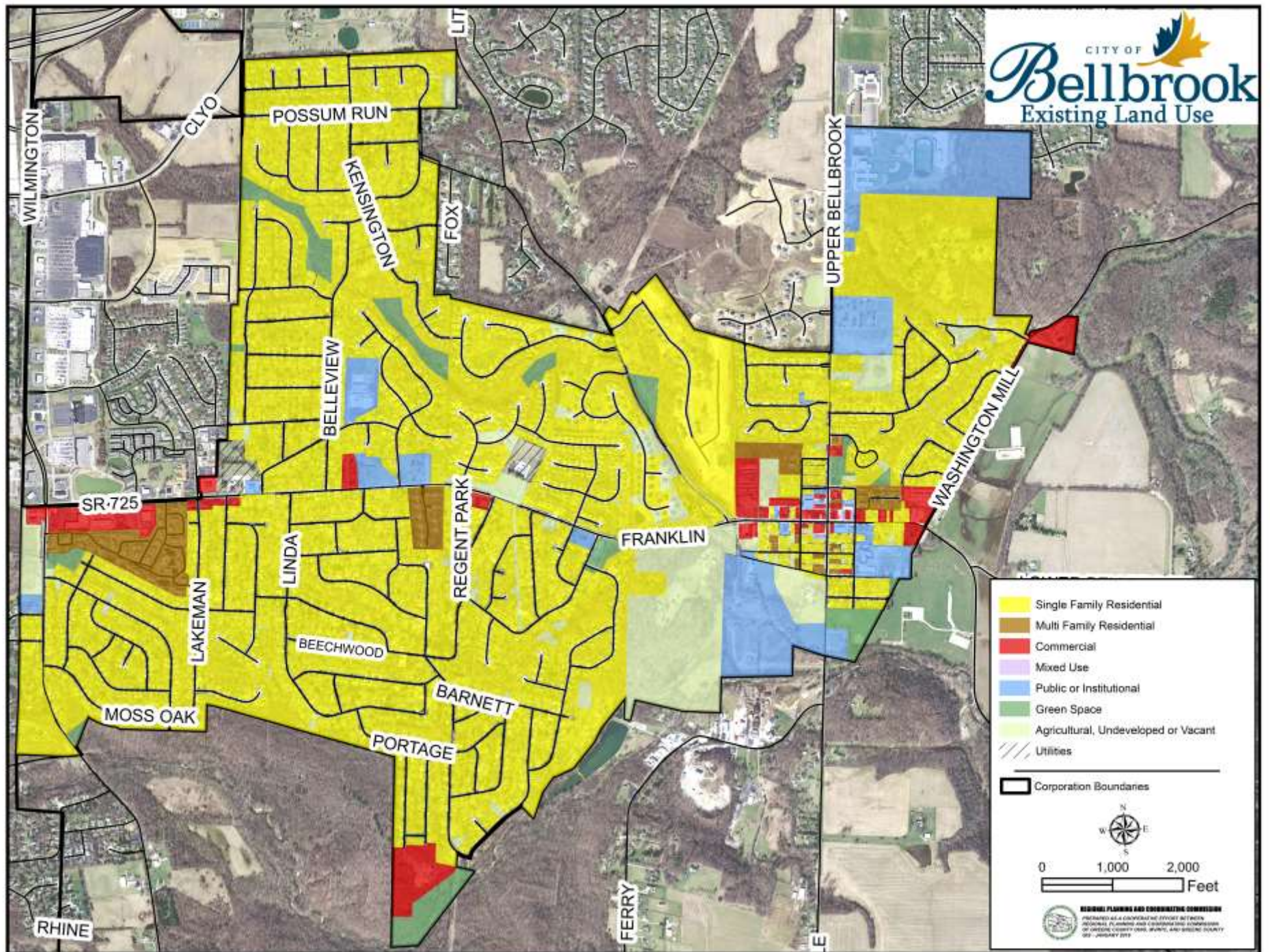
area around the Wilmington Pike corridor is currently seeing additional commercial and residential developments along Clio Road and Feedwire Road, in areas that are currently vacant.

	1975			2016			ACRE CHANGE	PERCENT CHANGE
	Acres	% Developed	% Total	Acres	% Developed	% Total		
Single-Family Residential	664.2	65.8%	32.8%	1,226.1	67.1%	60.6%	561.9	85%
Two-Family Residential	3.7	0.4%	0.2%	8.3	0.4%	0.4%	4.6	124%
Multi-Family Residential	2.1	0.2%	0.1%	46.4	2.5%	2.3%	44.3	2109%
<b>TOTAL RESIDENTIAL</b>	<b>670.0</b>	<b>66.4%</b>	<b>33.2%</b>	<b>1,280.8</b>	<b>70.0%</b>	<b>63.3%</b>	<b>610.8</b>	<b>91%</b>
Commercial	15.3	1.5%	0.8%	63.0	3.4%	3.1%	47.7	311%
Mixed-Use	-	-	-	0.6	0.0%	0.0%	0.6	-
Schools	76.5	7.8%	3.8%	68.4	3.7%	3.4%	-8.1	-10%
Churches	44.9	4.4%	2.2%	18.8	1.0%	0.9%	-26.1	-58%
Parks & Open Space	13.0	1.3%	0.6%	54.3	3.0%	2.7%	41.3	318%
Cemeteries	14.7	1.5%	0.7%	17.8	1.0%	0.9%	3.1	21%
Governmental Services	0.4	0.0%	0.0%	54.4	3.0%	2.7%	54	13500%
<b>TOTAL PUBLIC &amp; SEMIPUBLIC</b>	<b>140.5</b>	<b>14.8%</b>	<b>7.4%</b>	<b>213.7</b>	<b>11.7%</b>	<b>10.6%</b>	<b>64.2</b>	<b>43%</b>
Utilities	7.3	0.7%	0.4%	14.1	0.8%	0.7%	6.8	93%
HOA Property	-	-	-	20.8	1.1%	1.0%	20.8	-
Right-of-Way	167.4	16.6%	8.3%	235.4	12.9%	11.6%	68	41%
<b>TOTAL DEVELOPED</b>	<b>1,009.5</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>49.9%</b>	<b>1,828.4</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>90.4%</b>	<b>818.9</b>	<b>81%</b>
Agricultural & Vacant	1,010.0	0.0%	51.0%	193.7	0.0%	9.6%	-816.3	-81%
<b>TOTAL UNDEVELOPED</b>	<b>1,010.0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>51.0%</b>	<b>193.7</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>9.6%</b>	<b>-816.3</b>	<b>-81%</b>
<b>TOTAL ACREAGE</b>	<b>2,019.5</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>2,022.1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>0%</b>

Figure 3.1: Basic Roadway Functional Classification

Source: Virginia Department of Transportation







## Future Land Use

Public input showed us that the citizens of Bellbrook overwhelmingly desire to maintain the small town suburban feel. Since growing outward is not a goal, Planning staff recommend growing and redeveloping inward with downtown renewal and maintaining the quality of existing residential neighborhoods as a primary goal. By now, the reader can see that all of the previous recommendations are interrelated and culminate into the following land use map. The Future Land Use map gives us the 30,000-foot view of what the City will look like thirty years from now. City leaders should use this map as a general guide and use it as the basis for future zoning and design code adjustments and overhauls.

## Mixed Use Downtown District

This area represents the traditional downtown area of Bellbrook, including many of its historic structures. A mixture of uses ranging from single family to commercial strip development characterize this area. Downtown represents the core of social life and economic vitality of a community. It is its heart and soul. A mixed use of businesses and residents, usually at high densities that is walkable defines the traditional downtown. Many communities have struggled to maintain a vibrant successful downtown core especially since urban sprawl became the norm. Today small cities search for answers to reimagine downtown, using the best of what worked in the past, and dreaming of new techniques to drive innovation to make downtown more inviting, safe, and sustainable socially as well as economically. Downtowns are becoming “destinations”.

## What is a destination downtown?

A destination is a deliberately marketed and constructed place to attract residents and outside visitors to recreate, educate, eat, entertain, shop, and stay. It is a place-making effort by the residents of a city and the owners of downtown businesses, supported by local government to define the character of downtown.

Downtown Bellbrook is in the eastern quarter of the city and described as the “Old Village”. The downtown area is focused along State Route 725, the main transportation corridor running east west through the City. Many alleys run between blocks for access to houses, businesses and parking. The Old Village Area (Downtown) is home to a number of public facilities, including the Municipal Building, the Winters-Bellbrook Library on Franklin Street, and Sugarcreek Township Fire Station #71. Bellbrook Fire Station #1 and city service garage are on North West Street near the Bellbrook Plaza. Bellbrook Park, along Main Street, offers recreation just a short walk north from the Franklin Street corridor.

Its two largest retailers anchor downtown Bellbrook, Dot’s Supermarket on the west and Dollar General on the east. Most retail is concentrated along Franklin Street and within Bellbrook Plaza. A number of single-family homes mix with the businesses along Franklin Street, especially east of East Street and west of West Street. There is a concentration of multi-family structures northeast of the center of town along Ryder Court. The residential area south of the downtown is primarily single-family dwellings with some two-family units and a few multi-family structures.



To the north and west of Downtown Bellbrook are a growing number of single-family suburban neighborhoods potentially within walking and biking distance. A key issue associated with many of these surrounding neighborhoods is a lack of safe and pleasant pedestrian/bike connections to downtown, especially for the neighborhoods along Little Sugarcreek Road.

Also surrounding the downtown area are a number of parks and open spaces. Magee Park, Sackett-Wright Park, Spring Lakes Park, Washington Mill Park and Sugarcreek Reserve offer hundreds of acres of outdoor recreation within a short distance from downtown, but safe pedestrian/bike connections are missing.

## Active Downtown District

Planning staff recommends the creation of a special overlay district within the bounds of the Mixed Use Downtown District. This overlay area would contain special design regulations intended to promote traditional small city downtown identity through architecture and form as described the Downtown Revitalization Section of this Plan. This area of Bellbrook is a key area to create a mixed use, pedestrian, bike, family, and business friendly environment. The future of this area should be built upon a “placemaking” effort led by the citizens, business owners, and leaders of Bellbrook via the Main Street four-point approach and its eight principles for revitalization. Bellbrook should focus complete street and access management practices in this area along with new streetscape elements...and for the long-term....form-based codes. Another long-term focus should be the reallocation and redevelopment of property currently owned by the city as a model for future redevelopment to reshape downtown.

While on-street parking is in short supply, the city must focus on long-term management of access points in this district because driveways are the reason on-street parking spaces are limited. The city should work with owners to coordinate shared access via alleys or via shared easements and eliminate access points when properties develop or redevelop. Short-term improvements may include cooperation among existing business owners to eliminate one driveway and to share another; being particularly possible on segments of Franklin and Main.

In the short-term, Bellbrook should amend the zoning code to reflect the short-term code recommendations mentioned on page 12 while the overhaul of design and form-based codes takes place. Some short-term streetscape improvements that the city can achieve include sidewalk planters, receptacles, signage, lighting and wayfinding and sidewalk repair. Short-term street improvements may include lane width adjustments, bike lanes or sharrows, crosswalks, and signage.

Temporary design elements such as a bike lanes can be installed to determine impact on pedestrian, bike, and auto traffic. Experiment with crosswalk design; install temporary pedestrian islands if needed; experiment with alternative on-street parking design (A note of caution: The city must consult a professional traffic engineer when looking at temporary improvements to ensure safety).

## Neighborhood Residential

The neighborhood residential district represents the largest



category for the Future Land Use Plan. Single-family owner-occupied structures are predominate. Approximately 44-acres of multifamily land use exists today in this district with most of that located in pockets along W. Franklin Street at the Mill Pond Apartment complex and the Wentworth Village Condominiums. Bellbrook should protect its single-family residential platted lands or town lots (subdivisions) for that purpose and consider multi-family units on unplatted lands. Single-family Development, multi-family, and duplexes should all be considered on vacant lands but not part of a subdivision. During the public input phase it was clear that the citizens of Bellbrook want to remain small and retain and maintain its suburban residential neighborhoods.

Future development should always consider pedestrian and bicyclist comfort. Residents should be able to safely and comfortably walk and bike to destinations downtown or to the various parks and schools. The use of neighborhood gateways and installation of sidewalks are encouraged in this district. With an aging population increased availability of public transit from these neighborhoods to medical service facilities, government offices is recommended.

## Commercial Center

The Commercial Center District represents Bellbrook's newest commercial development area. It is primarily made up of modern automobile focused developments or strip malls. The primary goal here is to promote regional businesses such as larger retail and food establishments. Development and redevelopment criteria here should focus on form and access management.

Redevelopment should include a high priority on minimizing access points and centralize parking to the rear with front

facing storefronts to minimize the strip mall feel. Two access points with cross access easements could serve this entire district with better efficiency and safety.

With regard to the vacant properties located on the west side of Wilmington – Dayton Road, Bellbrook should only allow a single access point with preferably a second access through the adjacent property in Centerville. Bellbrook should coordinate the review of access onto Wilmington-Dayton with the County Engineer and possibly require a traffic study as part of the development review process to determine the impact of a proposed development on the level of service and safety of the access point.

## Commercial Center of Residential

This area is located on various parcels fronting Franklin Street on the west side of the city. These small areas could be ideal for small commercial centers or residential uses. The frontage should not be divided and shared driveways should be used where possible.

## Community Commercial or Recreation

The Community Commercial Designation is for property of great importance for the future. The area is focused on land known locally as “Sans Souci”. As one of the few areas inside the city limits that is essentially undeveloped, this area could be a target for developers of residential subdivisions. However, the public input received at the open house clearly showed us that the residents who responded did not desire another residential subdivision in the City and specifically not on this property.

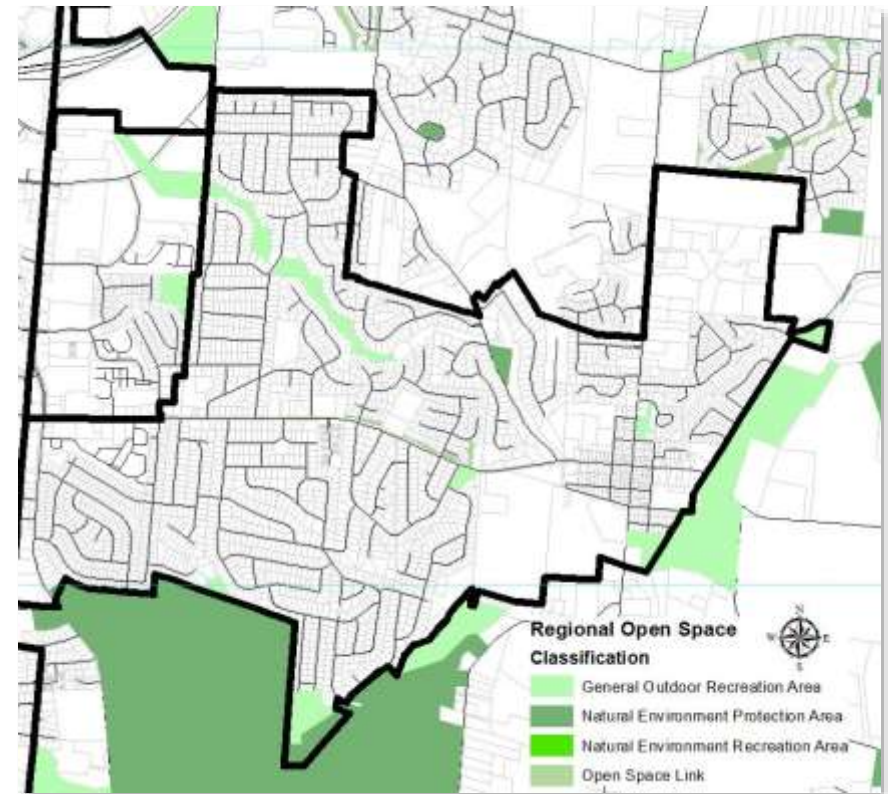


Ideas for this area focused on community-based commercial land uses specifically mixed uses with public open spaces and parkland. Other ideas included keeping it private as open space; developing a community center with trail connections to adjacent parks eventually to the Little Miami; mixed-use restaurants with amphitheater and small shops; and a family resort with plenty of open space for community use. The ideas were many and diverse. Decision makers should prioritize benefit to the community quality of life and if a proposed land use positively affects Bellbrook as a “destination”!

## Open Space, Parks, Recreation

This area includes existing public parks and open space as well as areas that could be included in this category in the future. For example if the trail from Dot’s north along little sugar creek is developed, Bellbrook should seek the purchase or obtain easement of the creek land for preservation as open space; its greatest value is for inclusion with Magee Park due to the property being located in a Special Flood Hazard Area.

Public input generally agreed that the property located at the southernmost tip of Bellbrook should remain as a recreational or park use. Ideas ranged from maintaining it as a public swimming pool, splash park, green space, animal sanctuary, playgrounds, or park district offices. It appears that more than one of the uses mentioned above can be done at this location simultaneously.



*Existing Regional Open Space Map of Bellbrook*

## Flood Plain

Bellbrook is bifurcated by the Little Sugarcreek Floodplain and its branch, while the Sugarcreek floodplain occupies the southern boundary of the City and then merges with the Little Miami Floodplain to the southeast. Proper management of the Floodplain is vital to reduce repetitive loss of property and vital to the environment and our quality of life.



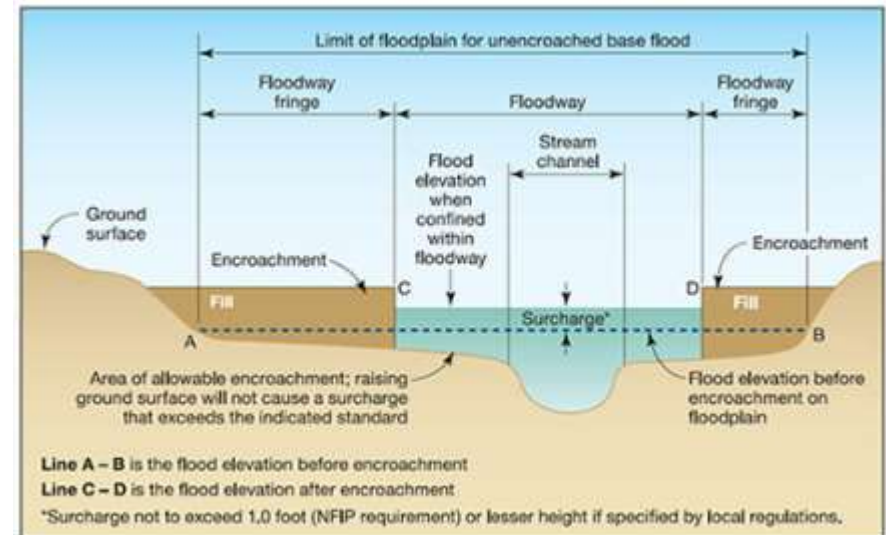
Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA) or floodplains are defined by FEMA as “as the area that will be inundated by the flood event having a 1-percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year. The 1-percent annual chance flood is also referred to as the base flood or 100-year flood.” One purpose of the SFHA is to manage development within these areas to meet the National Flood Insurance Rate Program requirements to minimize loss of property and life due to flooding. Another purpose of managing floodplain development in the SFHA is to mitigate undesired impacts of development to our natural resources such as increased untreated runoff from manmade impervious surfaces and to provide a needed buffer to filter chemicals and nutrients. In a natural state, or restored, floodplains are nature’s filters and erosion control network. Managed floodplains slow water down lessening the impact downstream and allowing the filter system to work. Letting nature do its work should be a priority for Bellbrook instead of building facilities to correct flood and water quality problems. It is recommended that Bellbrook protect its designated floodplain from development and if possible obtain conservation easements or purchase floodplain lands in order to produce an uninterrupted greenspace and protection area. Pervious surface walk paths should be permitted.

However, outside of the floodplain the city could encourage new developments to utilize permeable pavement for parking surfaces, green roofs to enhance water quality and reduce urban runoff etc. The City of Bellbrook when upgrading it’s storm water infrastructure on Franklin Street could utilize Flow Through Planters (as shown on page 25)

with a mixture of tree pits and even rain gardens. This will all work to reduce storm water volume and increase water quality. Also, the city could consider permeable paving when upgrading its streets or alleys.

With all of this in mind, flooding, repetitive losses, and stream degradation and loss of biological productivity is a regional issue. rr

Bellbrook in alliance with its neighboring jurisdictions of the Little Sugarcreek and Sugarcreek watershed and in the Little Miami watershed should work toward a common goal of increasing the water quality and slowing the water down before, it reaches the main bodies.



*FEMA Typical Riverine Floodplain Cross Section*  
Source: FEMA (<https://www.fema.gov>)





## Goal 6 Reduce the Impacts of Flooding Through Local Floodplain Management and Watershed Protection

### *Objective 6.1: Adopt Stricter Standards in the Flood Fringe*

NFIP Floodway development standards typically restricts development from obstructing the flow of water, or increasing flood height. The flood fringe is an important area for flood storage. Building and use of fill in this storage area increases flood height. This is especially true in urban areas where we see more impermeable surfaces and not only an increase in flood height but also an increase in time to concentration. Bellbrook should adopt strict standards for activity in the flood fringe such as mirroring requirement for developing in a Floodway, which require hydraulic and hydrologic analyses performed to determine if there will be “No Rise” in floodwater because of a project. Alternatively, the City could adopt a “no fill” policy where all new building must be built on columns or with flow through crawl spaces.

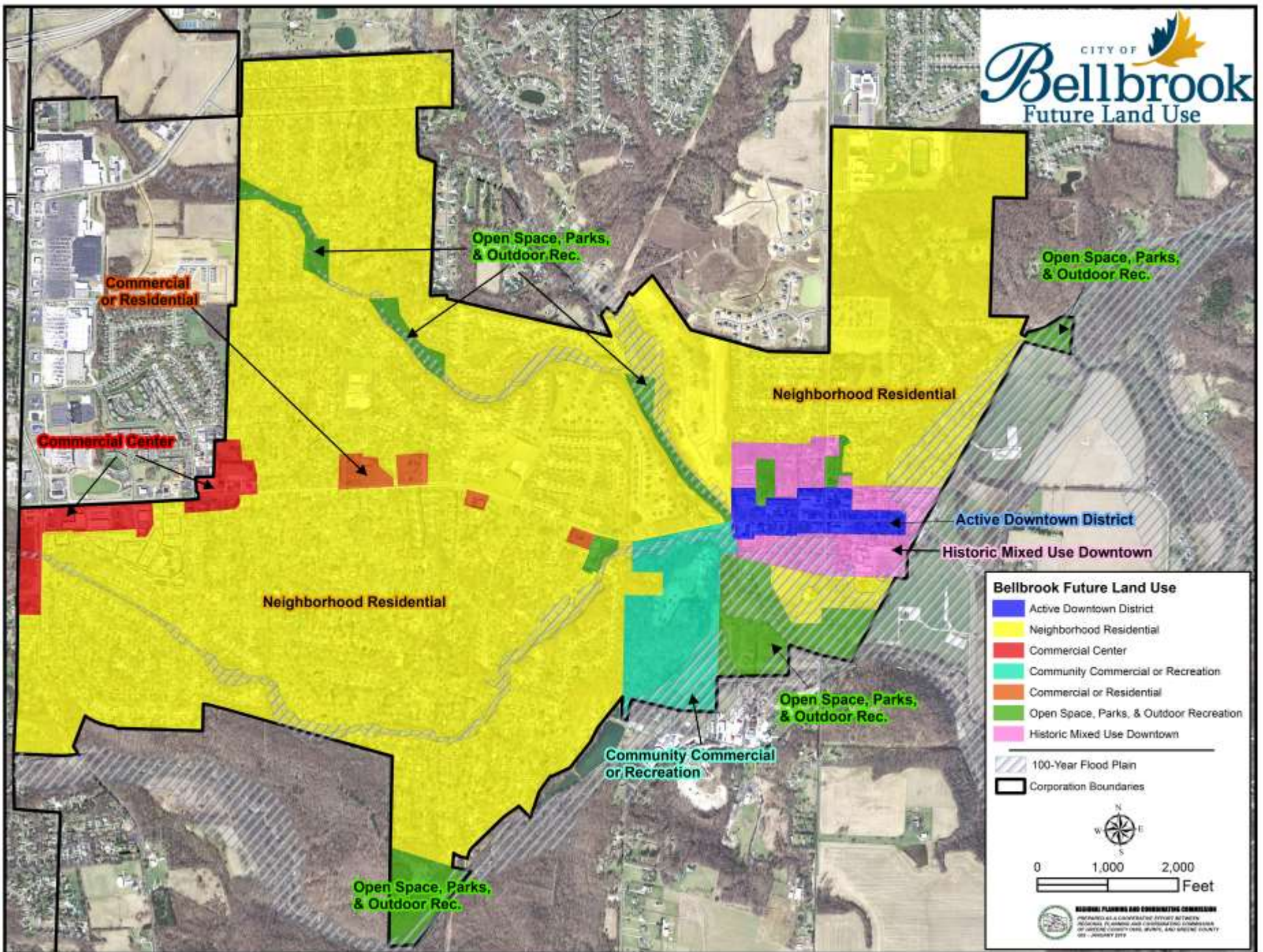
### *Objective 6.2: Participate in the Community Rating System*

The Community Rating System is a program under the National Flood Insurance Rate Program that encourages communities to adopt stricter standards to regulate the floodplain. The incentive to participating is the potential for reduction of insurance premiums for owners of property owners in the floodplain.

### *Objective 6.3: Form Partnerships with Neighboring Jurisdictions to Manage the Watershed*

Bellbrook should look at floodplain management with the cumulative impact from upstream development that is outside of the City limits. Simply put, political boundaries do not follow watershed boundaries. The water that flows through and near Bellbrook originates miles upstream and crosses multiple jurisdictions via Sugar Creek and Little Sugar Creek. Sugar Creek and Little Sugar Creek converge just south of town and then meet with the Little Miami River about a mile southeast along SR-725. Establishing partnerships with local governments within the watershed can be a beneficial to Bellbrook and the region. A unified approach to develop common goals for better water quality and reduction of storm water volume and intensity should be at the center of this effort. This collaborative approach to Watershed management has many benefits including the establishment of common goals for the region, community awareness and participation, establishes implementation measures, and ways to measure success.







## Healthy Community

How we plan and design communities has a direct impact on the health of our residents. Throughout this plan we have focused on subjects that foster active lifestyles and social interaction to make Bellbrook a more attractive place to live, recreate, entertain, and do business. The plan impacts the health of our community by promoting walkability, mixed-use infill development downtown (urban form and character), the bike and pedestrian plan, land use (parks) and a complete streets policy. This section will build upon the previous chapters by recommending specific actions related to community fitness, the support of health as well local food options.



### Goal 7: Support Policies and Programs that Promote Community Health

Community fitness is an important element for healthy communities. Fitness should not be only attainable from a local gym, but rather should be an inherent part of the fabric of the community. Everything from land use, walkability, and even public transportation play a key role in maintaining a communities overall health. *“Recent research has found that over 50% of premature deaths are attributable to non-medical factors, such as where one lives and the opportunities for health and economic mobility, including education, jobs,*

*income, access to housing and transit, community safety, and other well-established social determinants of health.”--- Build Health Places Netowrk, Summarizing the Landscape of Health Communities report*

#### Objective 7.1: Achieve Health in all Policies (HiAP)

According to the Healthy Communities Policy Guide developed by the American Planning Association a Health in all Policies is defined as *“a change in the systems that determine how policy decisions are made and implemented by local, state, and federal government agencies to ensure that policy decisions have beneficial or neutral impacts on the determinants of health. HiAP is a collaborative approach to improving the health of a community by incorporating health, sustainability, and equity considerations into decision making across sectors and policy areas.”* --Healthy Communities Policy Guide

When making decisions about infrastructure investments and plans, impact on community health should be considered by decision makers and local government. For example, projects that include bike lanes or sidewalks where none existed before would receive priority support over projects that did not. Especially if those projects provided better connections to downtown, schools, or parks and trails.

#### Objective 7.2: Support Healthy and Affordable Housing



Healthy and affordable housing ensures that residents of all incomes and backgrounds are not exposed to risk elements such as lead paint, radon, mold and other environmental and structural hazards that make them sick. Healthy and affordable housing enables residents to spend more money on good food options and housing improvements instead of getting sick from hazards in their own house. Much of Bellbrook was built prior to 1978, the year lead-based paint was banned in the United States. This is important moving forward as housing ages, owner's age, and renovations are needed. Deteriorating and disturbed paint exposes people to lead poisoning risk. Have your home tested if your home was built prior to 1978 and you plan renovations that will disturb existing paint or if you have deteriorating and chipping paint. Radon a dangerous radioactive gas and thought to be a leading cause of lung cancer over long exposures. Given that we spend a great deal of time at home, our homes are high risk locations. Have your home tested. Elevated levels can be remediated by simple and inexpensive vent systems installed in your home. Molds can have negative effects on allergies that can impact the respiratory system. Humidity and moisture can increase likelihood of mold in the home. Mold however is a bit harder to remediate.

Bellbrook can work with community action agencies, local CHIP program, and other charitable organizations to help low-to moderate income residents, especially those elderly on a fixed income, rehabilitate existing housing stock to meet health, safety, and residential rehab standards, and make ownership more affordable over the long-term. It is recommended that City Officials collaborate with the Health District to educate residents via workshops and health fair events will benefit the residents of Bellbrook.



## Goal 8: Promote Active Lifestyles

The term “active lifestyle” doesn’t just apply to the athlete or those simply blessed with natural physical prowess. An active lifestyle extends to everyone; or it should. Being active means a regular walk down the new sidewalk to get to downtown Bellbrook or a slow bike ride down a new bike trail shown on the pedestrian and bike path plan. Active people are healthier people. So regardless of age, ability, or background, Bellbrook should develop programs and cooperative efforts to provide free education and programs that encourage its citizens to be “active safely”.

### *Objective 8.1: Infrastructure Improvements for Improved Health*

Bellbrook is positioned well to take advantage of the nation’s largest network of trails. These trails bring health and economic benefits to the community by providing convenient and alternate access to destinations via walking and biking. Extension of the bike path along State Route 725 to Spring Valley along with other extensions of sidewalks and multi-use paths are noted on the bike and pedestrian plan map. On-street bike lanes or sharrows should be considered where feasible. Separated bike lanes are preferred where space allows. This plan focuses on connecting neighborhoods to downtown and children to schools. For a more detailed examination of improvements see the Transportation section in Chapter Six.



## *Objective 8.2: Education and Active Lifestyle Events*

To promote an active lifestyle, besides the infrastructural improvements that allow it, education is a key component. Local schools through the Safe Routes to School Program can hold bicycle and pedestrian safety classes for its students. Local police departments or possibly a local bicyclist group or the City itself can hold pedestrian and bicycle workshops open to the public to further promote an active lifestyle. Once the gaps are filled in the multi-modal network with sidewalk and trail extensions this will be even more imperative for improved safety.

Encourage more events like the Eagle 5K runs or bike using local athletic groups to sponsor annual runs and walks to benefit worthy health causes and education. The City could hold bike rodeos during the Sugar Maple Festival and the Lions Festival. A bicycle rodeo is a set of education stations that cover various safety and maneuver scenarios for navigation on a bicycle led by qualified instructors. Organizers should develop a 5k run specifically focused on downtown Bellbrook for added exposure. This run could be held in conjunction with a community health and wellness event where local food growers could provide healthy locally grown food options.

The public input process brought forth the idea of an annual community health and wellness event led by local fitness instructors and health care professionals. Here residents could participate in free exercise instruction and equipment use, health screenings such as blood pressure, BMI etc... along with demonstrations for health cooking and first aid to

name a few ideas. Ideal locations could be the various parks, high school, or Sugarcreek Board of Education property on South East Street.

A “Fitness in the Parks Program” could greatly contribute to encouraging an active lifestyle and social interaction. Parks and recreation and the role it plays in community health are evident. To further promote a healthy community the City could work with the Parks Department to implement a “fitness in the parks” program.



## Goal 9: Foster Local Healthy Food Options

There are many benefits of having regular access to seasonal local food options. Local foods are fresh and picked at the peak of ripeness so therefore it just tastes better. Food harvested on a mass scale and shipped to supermarkets are picked before ripened and handled many times before hitting the counter. Local food is seasonal so it has limited availability but its flavor better and its nutrient values remain high due to its freshness. Nutrient values decrease in fruits and vegetables that travel for days and stored for weeks. Local food is safer because there are less opportunity for mishandling and contamination.

## *Objective 9.1: Establish a Regular Farmers Market in Downtown Bellbrook*



While a regular farmers market located anywhere in Bellbrook is good....location of a regular market in downtown fosters downtown revitalization goals and developing a more socially interactive downtown, local business opportunities and collaboration, and builds upon local history and current festivals such as the Sugar Maple Festival. Farmers market is one element toward making downtown Bellbrook a “destination”. Other positive impacts of Farmers Markets:

-  Supports small local farmers through direct sale to customers
-  Local food is sustainable and environmentally friendly. Most food travels more than 1,500 miles to reach your table, a fossil fuel intensive process. Not to mention, locally grown foods have less impact on soils, water, and air quality.
-  Local foods generally have more nutritional values being higher in antioxidants and less of the bad stuff.
-  Farmers markets promotes the humane treatment of animals through availability of meats, cheeses, and eggs from animals raised on grazing lands without hormones and chemicals.
-  Food education is available for free through simple social interaction with your local farmer where recipes and food knowledge can be exchanged.
-  Shopping becomes an event! What is better than interacting with your neighbors, eating good food, taking your children for a stroll through a market.



*Farmers Market Autumn 2018 Bellbrook Ohio*  
Source: Melissa Dodd City of Bellbrook



*Farmers Market Bellbrook Ohio*  
Source: Melissa Dodd City of Bellbrook



In the short-term a farmers market could be established in cooperation with owners of the Bellbrook Plaza in the heart of downtown closing North West Street to vehicle traffic. In the long-term the disposition of City owned property in downtown could play a role in establishing a permanent site for the market in conjunction with local business owners to aid with parking. Alternative locations include any of the school sites or park sites though not located in the downtown area.

### *Objective 9.2: Promote Dining Options that use Locally Grown and Seasonal Food*

Another recommendation is to attract new dining options to downtown that utilize local produce and provide healthy dining options to fill vacant downtown spaces. The city and Chamber of Commerce can encourage local restaurants to use locally grown and healthy choice options through incentives such as simple recognition and promotional items such as chamber newsletter and social media.

### *Objective 9.3: Community Gardens*

The City of Bellbrook should encourage community gardens on vacant parcels or on unallocated space on publically or privately owned lands. Gardens can be supported by dues, or even from sponsors. Sponsors can come in the form of private businesses, parks departments, churches, or even schools. Gardens can raise money by selling square inches of the property to large numbers of sponsors.

The Community should organize a meeting of interested people in order to determine if the project is viable. Make sure to identify all your resources to aid in the creation of a garden and choose a site where vegetation can get at least 6 hours of sunshine a day and has adequate water availability, as well as healthy unpolluted soils. Also, be sure to check if liability insurance will be needed for the garden.



Source: Pexels.com Stock Photo

### *Objective 9.4: Remove Policy Barriers to Farmers Markets and Community Gardens*

In many communities, it is difficult to establish a farmers market because a farmers market is not a defined use in the zoning code. Bellbrook's zoning code should make Farmers Market a permitted land use whether on public or private land within a specified area such as within the Historic Mixed Use Downtown district shown on the Bellbrook Future Land Use Plan.



Recommended Language Recommended by National Policy & Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity in its publication titled *Establishing Land Use Protections for Farmers Markets*

## Recommended Language

*Permitted use. Farmers' Markets are a permitted use in the following zoning districts: downtown commercial, neighborhood commercial, institutional, public, mixed-use, open space, multi-family residential \_\_\_\_\_ [ add other use districts ] subject to the following regulations:*

- ① *All Farmers' Markets and their vendors comply with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations relating to the operation, use, and enjoyment of the market premises;*<sup>29</sup>
- ② *All Farmers' Markets and their vendors receive all required operating and health permits, and these permits (or copies) shall be in the possession of the Farmers' Market Manager or the vendor, as applicable, on the site of the Farmers' Market during all hours of operation;*





## Economic Development

Economic development can mean many things depending on who you ask. For the purposes of this plan, the term economic development refers to improving the well-being and quality of life for the community of Bellbrook by creating/retaining jobs, diversifying the economic base of the city (different types of jobs/different industries) and growing the tax base (better wages, more people).

The following text highlights areas of consideration for economic development in Bellbrook.

But first, it's important to mention the central component of any successful Economic development program—people.

The World Bank links successful economic development programs with citizen engagement. In order for Bellbrook to succeed, its citizens need to be knowledgeable and vocal advocates for the city.



Figure 7.1. Illustrates the relationships between the three key players to economic success

## Growing your Business Footprint

A lot of people live in Bellbrook but work and shop elsewhere which means that during a typical weekday, the city isn't producing additional revenue since property taxes are fixed and are not dependent on the traffic flow and business environment of the city. The goal then becomes to keep people in Bellbrook during the day by providing more places of employment and/or more places to dine and shop. While the city does not have an income tax, workers would shop locally during their lunches and after work benefiting local stores. Additionally, new businesses would ideally mean property improvements or construction which would benefit the city with additional property taxes and increased utilities.

## A Walkable City

The millennial demographic has entered the stage of life where they're buying their first or second homes. Broadly speaking, this demographic is looking for walkable neighborhoods, a diversity of restaurants and bars, affordable home prices, good schools and bicycle paths. Bellbrook has many of these things already in place, or in the works. Events such as food truck nights, and farmers markets, would be ways to quickly create this type of environment without having to drastically alter existing buildings, streets and zoning codes.

Ensuring that young couples can envision themselves alternately shopping for groceries, or spending a night out, on the same main street will ensure that Bellbrook has a long and prosperous future ahead of it.

## Arts

Part of creating a walkable city environment that attracts millennials and young families is a vibrant art scene. This



doesn't mean that every building's surface must become a mural for creative expression. Art, can and should match the community it stems from. For Bellbrook, that could mean everything from outdoor concerts, wine tasting events, a small playhouse/theater etc. The possibilities are endless. The city should encourage and aggressively promote artistic venues that arise organically.



*Mural outside of Devil Winds Brewery in Downtown Xenia, Ohio*

## Marketing

Marketing means more than the occasional social media post. There's no singular silver bullet to get a message out into community and to engage its citizens. It takes deliberate and strategic effort. Every "win" and every event that the City of Bellbrook has should have a press release connected with it. If Bellbrook is seen as a place where exciting and new things are happening, it will be a place where exciting and new things happen.

## Transparency

While it may not seem like it has anything to do with economic development, having a transparent government (goals, budget, staffing) dramatically improves the relationship between the government and the people it represents. The goal should be to continue having all major government documents such as the annual budget easily available on-line, which will help to create an environment of trust and advocacy.

A city's website shouldn't just be a source of information however, it should invite feedback and dialogue. For example: create a page on the city's website where citizens can ask questions and see the answers to questions that others have asked. Or, the city can even schedule "live video chats" on Facebook or other social media platforms where city officials can directly address questions and concerns.





## Incentives

When most prospective companies initially reach out to a local government the very first question they'll ask is "What types of incentives do you have?"

Economic incentives can take on many forms: a grant, loan, tax abatement, tax credits, discounted utilities or discounted property. To be competitive in today's world, governments at every level need to be able to offer businesses incentives to invest in their jurisdiction. Luckily, a good number of incentives already exist through various county and state programs. These incentives could be used to aid current Bellbrook businesses into growing, or to entice companies from other regions to relocate into the city. There are not many incentives currently offered to help start-up companies as they are often seen as riskier investments, however it's possible to aid start-up companies through the usage of shared spaces and incubators.

It is crucial to understand what grants, loans and other programs already exist and then, if possible, create local incentive programs to fill in the gaps of areas that these existing programs may not cover. Bellbrook's two biggest partners in finding and accessing current incentives are the county and Dayton Development Coalition (DDC). The city should be in constant contact with both of these resource partners.

One economic incentive that is worth special consideration is Tax Increment Financing (TIF). TIF bonds finance public improvements within designated areas. These improvements increase the area's desirability, raising property values. The additional revenue attributed to higher property values is used to repay the bonds. TIFs are a terrific way to finance infrastructure improvements by creating a bond which essentially pays for itself.

## Budget

A government's budget is the easiest way to determine what it values and where it wants to go. If economic development is to be a priority for the city, then it needs to be reflected in the budget as well. This could mean many things from hosting events, providing incentives and partnering with local economic development agencies and staffing.

## Business Retention, Expansion and Recruitment

Regularly meeting with local business is a central component to understanding the current business climate. Are businesses frustrated? Are they looking to expand? Is there a need they have that the city or county can aid with?

Partnering with the county's Department of Development on these visits brings additional resources to the table for these conversations and is a standard practice around the county.

Finally, going on the offensive is important when it comes to drawing new businesses to Bellbrook. If there's a business that city officials want for the community, the city should be proactive and engage with that business and not wait for businesses to come to it.

## Incubators

Incubators/co-share environments are the new "buzz-words" in economic development. The Greene County Department of Development commissioned a research project through Wright State two years ago to look a little closer at this new business model.



A business incubator is a company that helps new and startup companies to develop by providing services such as management training or office space.

Usually, these companies partner with local governments for operating costs and/or their initial capital investment. Incubators are seen as an avenue for local business and government to partner in helping small start-up companies.

Our study found that while some incubators have found a lot of success in spinning up small companies and then keeping these companies local after they move out of their incubator space, all too often these incubator spaces become money pits for local government and business alike.

Incubators can work, but to do so, they require outside of the box thinking and a strong partnership between local businesses, government and educational institutions.

For example: some incubators have found success in partnering with local high schools. As part of a senior's final semester, they have the opportunity to intern with a business out of the local incubator for high school and college credit. Once they graduate, they might even receive a job offer from the business they helped.

## Measure Your Success

Creating a vibrant downtown takes time and patience. To measure the success of revitalization efforts, communities track economic health using pre-determined indicators.

Amount of Public and Private Investment	
✓	Investments in infrastructure, building rehabilitation, and other improvements indicate community support for revitalization and demonstrate interest in living, working, and doing business downtown.
Changes in Property Values	
✓	Increasing property values indicate growing demand for residents and businesses to locate downtown.
Sales Tax Revenue	
✓	Increasing sales tax revenues indicate how well local businesses are attracting customers.
Hotel Occupancy Rate	
✓	Higher hotel occupancy rates demonstrate the community's success at becoming an attractive tourist destination.
Business Mix	
✓	Downtowns should have a mix of business types, which should include a combination of locally-owned businesses and larger franchises.
Number of Attendees at Downtown Events	
✓	Increasing attendance at public events indicates how successful the community's marketing efforts are at attracting locals and visitors downtown.
Vacancy Rate	
✓	Commercial Buildings-Low commercial vacancy rates indicate that downtown is an attractive, economically viable location for businesses to operate.
✓	Residential Buildings- Low residential vacancy rates indicate that downtown is an attractive place to live.
Percentage of Streets with Sidewalks	
✓	To attract customers and improve mobility, most (if not all) streets downtown should be lined with well-designed, well-maintained.

Sourced from: Houston-Galveston Council's *Bringing Back Main Street: A Guide to Downtown Revitalization for Local Governments*



## Conclusion

Attractive public spaces bring people together. Vibrant main streets provide a space for people to connect with each other and local businesses.

For a local government to successfully engage in economic development, it must first understand its community. What is Bellbrook at its core? What does it want to be? Where will it be 10 years from now?

A healthy dialogue between the citizens of Bellbrook and local business/government leaders will answer these questions, providing the direction of the city for many years to come. Economic development is the engine that will power this change to happen, providing resources and tax revenue by attracting people and businesses to Bellbrook.



Goals and Objectives and Recommendations	Objective/Alt/ Recommendation	Priority	Partners	Funding Sources	What First?	Time Frame	Responsible Party
<b>Goal 1: Reinvent and Revitalize Downtown Bellbrook</b>							
Adopt the Main Street Approach	1.1	High	Chamber/ GCED/ Ohio Heritage/ Business/ Hist. Society	Local Gov't/ Private Business	Determine the level of participation and hold initial Community Visit	1-3 yr	Planner/City Manager
(Alternative to 1.1) Downtown Assessment Resource Team Visit w/Downtown Affiliate Membership	Alternative	High	Same as above	Local Gov't/ Private Business	Determine to use this alternate approach and schedule the DART visit	1-3 yr	Planner/City Manager
Create a Special Active Downtown Overlay District	1.2	Med	Planning Board, City Council, Zoning Commission	Local Gov't	Make determination on final boundaries of District	2 - 4 yr	Planning Board/ Planner
(Short-Term Recommendation) Amend Zoning Code to reflect zero setbacks and footprint to extend to public ROW	Recommendation	High	Planning Board, City Council, Zoning Commission	Local Gov't	Develop Text Amendment	1-3 yr	Planning Board/ Planner
Adopt Form-Based Codes for Special Active Downtown District	1.3	Med	Planning Board/ City Council/ Zoning Commission/ Historic Soc/ GCED	Local Gov't/ Downtown Associates/Chamber	Participate in Main Street Program and complete downtown assessment and inventory	2-4 yr	Planning Board/ Planner
(Short-Term Recommendation) Amend Zoning Code to reflect short term recommendations on page ###	Recommendation	High	Planning Board/ City Council/ Zoning Commission	Local Gov't	Develop Text Amendment and form Special Active Downtown Overlay District	1-3 yr	Planning Board/ Planner
Adopt Policies that Encourage Walkability and Access to Downtown	1.4	High	Planning Board/ City Council	Local Gov't	Revise Complete Streets Policy template on page 34 to suite Bellbrook. Create an Access management plan and map.	1-3 yr	Planning Board/ Planner
Redevelop City-owned Property Located Downtown	1.5	High	Chamber/CIC/ Downtown Assoc/ GCED/ Ohio Heritage/ Business/ Hist. Socie-	Local Gov't/ ODSA/Private	Develop Text Amendment and form Special Active Downtown Overlay District	2-20 yr	City Council/ CIC/GCED
Short-Term Streetscape Amenities	1.6	High	Planner/City Administrator/ Downtown Associates/Private Groups	Local Gov't/ Private/ Downtown Assoc./Active Groups	Begin with what you can do now like street furniture, bike racks, plantings, community gardens	1-3 yr	Planner/City Manager



Goals and Objectives and Recommendations	Objective/Alt/Recommendation	Priority	Partners	Funding Sources	What First?	Time Frame	Responsible Party
<b>Goal 2: Focus on Historic Preservation</b>							
Become a Certified Local Government Through the State Historic Preservation Office	2.1	High	Local Gov't/ Historic Soc/ Chamber	Local Gov't	Meet all criteria for the application to Ohio History Connection <a href="https://www.ohiohistory.org/preserve/state-historic-preservation-office/clg/about-certified-local-governments">https://www.ohiohistory.org/preserve/state-historic-preservation-office/clg/about-certified-local-governments</a>	2-4 yr	Planner/ Historic Soc
Develop a Historic Site and Structure Inventory	2.2	Med	Local Gov't/ Historic Soc/ Chamber	Certified Local Government Matching Grant/ Local Gov't	Become a Certified Local Government	3 - 5 yr	City Manager/ Planner
<b>Goal 3: Infrastructure Improvements to Downtown</b>							
Replace Open Drainage With Storm Sewers	3.1	High	Local Gov't/ ODOT	Local Gov't/ OPWC/ODOT	Obtain Estimate from Civil Engineer	1-3 yr	Planner/City Manager
Work with Utility Suppliers to Place Utilities Underground	3.2	Low	Utility Suppliers/ Local Gov't/ Developers	Utility Suppliers/ Developers	Define or institute an underground utilities district. Could use the Downtown District	5-20 yrs	Planner/City Manager
<b>Goal 4: Develop a Community Identity through Branding, Gateways, and Wayfinding</b>							
Develop a Brand	4.1	High	Citizens	Local Gov't	Hold group design meetings; use local artists; hold contests	1-3 yr	Chamber/ Planner
Build New Gateways	4.2	Med	Chamber/CIC/ Downtown Assoc/ GCED/Local	Local Gov't/ Downtown Associates/	Develop brand and build off of that for the design of gateways. Acquire ROW or land	3-6yrs	Chamber/ Planner
Enhance Wayfinding and Signage	4.3	High	Planning Board, City Council, Chamber/CIC/ GCED	Local Gov't/ Downtown Assoc	Develop the brand then use local artists or a consultant to design elements. Do little things that can be done inex-	1 - 3 yr	Planning Board/Planner



Goals and Objectives and Recommendations	Objective/Alt/Recommendation	Priority	Partners	Funding Sources	What First?	Time Frame	Responsible Party
<b>Goal 5: Connect Neighborhoods to Downtown and Encourage Active Modes of Travel</b>							
Implement the Pedestrian, Bike, and Multiuse Path Plan	5.1	High	Local Gov't/Park Districts/Trail Orgs/Schools/ODOT/Active Groups/	COTF/HSIP/SRTS/TAP/CMAIP/ODOT/Local/CDBG	Work on inexpensive project first like crosswalk enhancements, repairs, or painting sharrows etc.	1-15 yrs	Planning Board/City Manager/Planner
Adopt a Complete Streets Policy	5.2	High	Local Gov't	Local Gov't	Simply modify the template provided and adopt the policy.	1-3 yr	Planner/City Manager
Short-Term Complete Streets Implementation	Recommendation	High	Local Gov't	Local Gov't	Enhance crosswalks, paint sharrows, inexpensive streetscape amenities, sidewalk repairs	1 - 3 yr	Planning Board/Planner
Adopt Access Management Best Practices	5.3	Med	Local Gov't/ Business Owners	Local Gov't/ Business/ developers	Work with a consultant or RPCC or develop access management standards. Could add to zoning districts	2-4 yr	Planning Board/City Manager/Planner
Short-Term Solutions to Enhance On-street Parking in Downtown Using Access Management	Recommendation	High	Local Gov't/ Business Owners	Local Gov't/ Business/ developers	Identify driveways that can be shared by multiple businesses and eliminate as many driveways as possible. Business/Landowner cooperation is essential and should be voluntary	1-3 yr	Planning Board/City Manager/Planner
<b>Goal 6: Reduce the Impacts of Flooding Through Local Floodplain Management and Watershed Protection</b>							
Adopt Stricter Standards in the Flood Fringe	6.1	High	Local Gov't/ OD-NR/County FP Admin	Local	Work with ODNR Division of Water to set standards. Seek input from owners of property	1-3 yr	Planner/ODNR
Participate in the Community Rating System	6.2	Med	Same as above	Local	Determine if Bellbrook's Residence can benefit from this program. If so, adopt new standards	Ongoing if feasible	Planner/ODNR
Form Partnership with Neighboring Jurisdictions to Manage the Watershed	6.3	Med	Multiple Jurisdictions	Multiple Jurisdictions/ODNR/OEPA	Identify Watershed or Sub watershed and hold initial meeting	2-4 yr	Planner/ Multiple Jurisdictions



Goals and Objectives and Recommendations	Objective/Alt/ Recommendation	Priority	Partners	Funding Sources	What First?	Time Frame	Responsible Party
<b>Goal 7: Support Policies and Programs that Promote Community Health</b>							
Achieve Health in all Policies	7.1	High	Local Gov't/ Health District/	Local Gov't	Develop the policy and adopt.	1-3 yr	Planner/City Manager
Support Healthy and Affordable Housing Efforts	7.2	High	Same as above	CHIP/CDBG/ Community Action/ODH	Continue work with the CHIP program. Work with Health District to educate about	1-3 yr	Planner/City Manager
<b>Goal 8: Promote Active Lifestyle</b>							
Infrastructure Improvements for Improved Health	8.1	Med	Local Gov't	Multiple	Implement Pedestrian and Bike Plan	1-15 yrs	Planning Board/
Education and Active Lifestyle Events	8.2	High	Local Gov't	Local Gov't	Make a list of all ideas for events...try them all	1-3 yr	Planning Board/
<b>Goal 9: Foster Local Healthy Food Options</b>							
Establish a Regular Farmers Market in Downtown Bellbrook	9.1	High	Downtown Assoc/ Chamber	Local	Inventory short-term and potential long-term sites within downtown Bellbrook	1-3 yrs	Downtown Assoc/ Chamber
Promote Dining Options that Use Locally Grown and Seasonal Foods	9.2	Low	Chamber/ Downtown Assoc	Chamber	Chamber could coordinate with local growers and help establish working relationships	Ongoing	Chamber
Community Gardens	9.3	Low	Local residents/ land owners/ Local Gov't	N/A	Identify unused properties in the City's inventory and private vacant lots.	1-3 yr	Local Gov't
Remove Policy Barriers to Farmers Markets and Community Gardens	9.4	High	Local Gov't	Local Gov't/ Private/ Downtown Assoc./Active Groups	Develop Text Amendments to Zoning Code	1-3 yrs	Planning Board/ Planner/ Council